GEORGE W. BONNELL, FRONTIER JOURNALIST
IN THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

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GEORGE W. BONNELL, FRONTIER JOURNALIST IN THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

by

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THESIS

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PREFACE

Journalists in the Republic of Texas tended to be eccentric, untamed, and unpredictable. George William Bonnell, editor of the Texas Sentinel at Austin in 1840, was no exception. Rumor has it that Bonnell once bit off a man's nose in a fist fight in Mississippi. Yet that same man, who may or may not have maimed the Mississippian, helped organize a society in the Texas capital devoted to caring for widows and orphans of Texans who had fallen in battle. He also wrote about Texas: "Cities are growing up, in places which a few years ago, were only inhabited by the wild beasts, and wilder savages, and civilization and refinement are rapidly taking possession of the wilderness and bringing it under the dominion of man." Journalists in the Republic tended also to be gregarious, restive, and blessed with a multitude of interests. George Bonnell was first a newspaperman, but he was also an Indian fighter, an author, a public official, an adventurer, a participant. He was enthusiastic about Texas and was one of her most eloquent spokesmen. He was not a native. Extraordinary as he was, however, Bonnell did not dominate; he did not overshadow his contemporary journalists by any means. Men such as George Teulon, Samuel Whiting, Gus Tomkins, John Henry Brown, Martin Carroll Wing, and many others -- colorful newspapermen heretofore hardly touched upon by the historian -- lie fallow waiting in Republic of Texas graves for the life-bringing stroke of a writer's pen.

The author's interest in the history of journalism in Texas from the early years of Anglo-colonization through the Republic, roughly 1813 to 1846, was brought to life during research conducted in the fall and winter of 1965 under a grant from the E. L. Kurth Foundation of Lufkin. Selection of a thesis topic from that field was practically a presumption, but a specific choice was by no means an easy task. The author was moved by many things regarding Bonnell, not the least of which was a personal attachment because the author was born in the centennial anniversary year of Bonnell's death. On a cold, December day in 1842, hours after the disastrous Battle of Mier on the Rio Grande, with Mexican cavalry in search of Texans who had eluded capture, Bonnell jeopardized his life by choosing not to retreat but to remain instead on the bank of the river to assist other Texans who might escape.

The author expresses his deepest thanks to his mentor and friend, C. Richard King, whose mastery of journalism history of the Republic guided the Kurth project and this thesis to completion. The author always will be indebted to his parents, who by their financial sacrifices made graduate study at The University of Texas possible; and to DeWitt C. Reddick, who made the past two years a reality. Appreciation goes to Olin E. Hinkle for his constructive suggestions and criticism. Miss Llerena B. Friend, Miss Mary Fleischer, and Mrs. Karen Collins of the Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center dug out manuscripts and references the author might never had known existed. Finally, he thanks his wife, Nancy, for her patience and her valuable assistance.

John M. Wallace

The University of Texas
Austin, Texas
March 22, 1965

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CHAPTER I

A MIGRANT EDITOR REACHES TEXAS

George William Bonnell came to Texas in 1836, as so many men did, looking for a fight.[1] He arrived not as the newspaperman he was, nor the author he would be, but as commander of a small group of men he had recruited for the Texas Revolution. Unfortunately, little is known about Bonnell before he came to the Republic. John Henry Brown, a contemporary journalist and historian, has recorded in his Encyclopedia of the New West that Bonnell was a native of Onondaga County, New York, who migrated to Alabama and edited papers at Selma and Mobile and who later moved to Mississippi to edit papers at Aberdeen and Columbus.[2] Upon those few details and upon Bonnell's own scant references to his early life can be based only a sketchy picture of the man prior to 1836. Columbus, the last-mentioned home of Bonnell, also was the jumping-off place for his entrance into Texas.

Onondaga County, pleasantly situated in central New York State with the county seat at Syracuse, is land-locked, but the northwestern corner is only approximately 20 miles from Lake Ontario. Bonnell's date and authenticated place of birth are not known; neither are the names of his parents, what his childhood was like, or why he moved south. His newspaper work, his writings, his service in Austin as a Spanish translator, his allusions in the Texas Sentinel to a wide variety of literary works indicate that he was extremely well educated. His years in Texas do much to prove that he was an impulsive, restless man, and perhaps that same spirit of adventure and desire to seek out new horizons had motivated him years before to depart New York for the South.

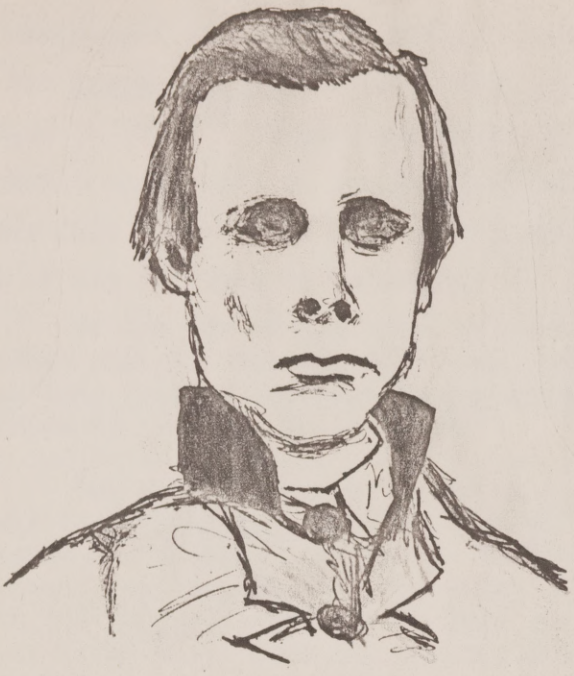
Fortunately, several writers have bequeathed differing but picturesque accounts of Bonnell's physical appearance. John Henry Brown says that Bonnell was chivalrous and impetuous, ". . . of small lithe stature, red hair, and sparkling gray eyes -- unselfish, generous, and loved by his associates."[3] Julia Sinks, then Miss Lee, daughter of Judge Joseph Lee, resided in Austin in 1839 and 1840, "and for several years thereafter."[4] There she met Bonnell, after the latter had moved from Houston, and, writing for the Galveston News in 1876, she pictured Bonnell thusly: "The most noticeable thing about Major

Bonnell was that he was extremely ill-favored, an ugliness so pronounced that it was unique. A shock of rosy hair lifted itself above his light blue eyes, and a face that seemed to be trying to outdo in color the rosy color of his crown."[5] Apparently possessed by a flair for the dramatic, Bonnell was described by Francis R. Lubbock in 1838 on an occasion when Bonnell arrived to lead a party of soldiers on an Indian hunt north from Houston:

> Major Bonnell was a young man of more than ordinary ability and information. I am not aware that he had acquired any special military experience, and I must say that his first appearance as our commander in chief did not impress the men that he had any special fitness or aptness to command a set of raw Texas boys. He was of medium height, with red hair and freckled face under a slouched hat, and he came into camp in a very long coat reaching nearly to his ankles, making quite a priestly appearance, and but for a belt around his waist and a long old sword dangling thereby, he looked less like a frontier soldier than any of us. . . .[6]

John Henry Brown further states that Bonnell had no kindred in Texas, ". . . but is fondly remembered by many who knew his worth and his intense patriotism."[7]

Accepting as fact Brown's statements about Bonnell's whereabouts in the South and applying information contained in Winifred Gregory's union list of newspapers, one can arrive at a fair sketch of Bonnell's newspaper activities in Alabama and Mississippi. Bonnell's references, scattered in pages of the Texas Sentinel, serve to shed additional light on his life in the latter state. Selma, Ala., located in the central region of the state, on the Alabama River, lies roughly 50 miles west of the capital, Montgomery. Only one newspaper there, the Courier, published from 1827 to 1833 and which became the Reporter in 1833, qualifies as the publication on which Bonnell might have worked.[8] No other paper existed in that town prior to Bonnell's removal to Mississippi.[9] Bonnell could have worked on any one or more of several papers published at Mobile, southeast of Selma on Mobile Bay just off the Gulf of Mexico. A rural edition of the Argus was published from 1822 to 1823 and was followed by the Mobile Advertiser in 1823. The city edition of the Argus continued until 1833, when it was succeeded by the Mobile Daily Advertiser. A Patriot, established in 1821, was issued as a weekly, triweekly, and semiweekly. Finally, a Mobile Weekly Register was published from 1821 under various forms of that name until 1910.[10] No evidence substantiates Brown's claim that Bonnell edited a paper at Aberdeen, Miss. Gregory's union list does not show that a paper was published at that town prior to 1838.



George William Bonnell
(Sketches by the Author)

Three newspapers at Columbus, Miss., qualify: the Democrat, established in 1830; the State Advocate, issued first in 1832; and the Southern Argus, which was begun in 1833.[11] Regarding Bonnell's work here, evidence is more concrete. A statement by Bonnell in the Sentinel at Austin on April 22, 1840, not only suggests that Bonnell may have edited the Southern Argus, but also hints at the extent of his sorjourn in Columbus:

> We are not in the habit of publishing complimentary notices from other papers. But the following, coming from a town in which we had so long resided previous to our emigration to Texas, we have been induced to transfer to our paper:
>
> "We have before us the first and several succeeding numbers of the Texas Sentinel, published at the city of Austin by our former townsman, George W. Bonnell. It is a small, but very respectable sheet; and abounds with the marks of its talented editor. Success to the Sentinel, and may he never be found sleeping on his post, whilst watching over the dearest interests of the bright and 'lonely Star.' --
>
> S. Argus

Columbus, county seat of Lowndes County, is in northeastern Mississippi approximately 10 miles inside the Alabama-Mississippi border. Elements of Bonnell's editorial feud in 1840 with Augustus M. Tomkins, editor of the Houston Times, provide more information pertinent to Bonnell's life in Mississippi. One reference in the Texas Sentinel of May 9, 1840, indicates that Bonnell had moved to that state from Alabama by 1829, since Bonnell spoke of himself as having been a resident for "seven or eight years" before he moved to Texas in 1836. Bonnell also alludes to an incident which occurred there "some six or seven years ago," which would have been 1833 or 1834, in which Tomkins charged him with having bit off a man's nose in an altercation. In denying that charge, Bonnell suggests that he was respected and honored considerably while a resident of the state.[12]

Either having been recruited by Texas agents or on his own, Bonnell formed in Columbus a company of volunteers and struck out for the Republic in the summer of 1836.[13] By his own admission, Bonnell bore all expenses of the company, which eventually reached Nacogdoches, Texas, in mid-August.[14] Whether Bonnell and his men knew thay had missed the decisive Battle of San Jacinto by three months is not known. Threats and rumors of retaliation by Mexico remained great, however, and missing that fight most likely did not deter any volunteers then en route from continuing on into the Republic in hope of engaging the enemy at some later date. Issues of the Texas Sentinel

for March 25 and May 9, 1840, furnish an outline of the route Bonnell and his company followed in reaching Texas. Having left Columbus, the men proceeded southwest to Jackson, a distance of approximately 140 miles. A march of 100 miles south along the Mississippi River to Natchez was followed by a crossing of that river and a journey of almost 105 miles across Louisiana through Alexandria[15] to Natchitoches. The trip from that town to her twin city, Nacogdoches, Texas, consumed 90 more miles. Bonnell and his party probably crossed the Sabine River at Gaines Ferry on the most popular route into Texas from Natchitoches, along the road that led to San Augustine and Nacogdoches.[16] Upon entering Texas, Bonnell and 35 men of his company were enlisted in the Texas army for six months. A muster roll was presented to Sam Houston, who apparently gave Bonnell a captaincy. Bonnell and his men were ordered by Houston to remain at Nacogdoches, as ". . . great excitement prevailed in that section of country on account of an expected Indian invasion. . . ."[17] "The company remained their [sic] near six weeks," Bonnell wrote, but soon after Houston's election as President in December Bonnell was instructed to disband the force at Nacogdoches.[18] Bonnell followed Houston's recommendation and soon rode south. At that time, the city of Houston still existed only in the minds of Augustus and John Allen; the First Congress of the Republic convened at Columbia, roughly 50 miles southwest of the future capital, on October 3, 1836. Nineteen days later Sam Houston and Mirabeau B. Lamar were inaugurated president and vice-president, respectively.[19] Bonnell apparently settled for awhile in Columbia, as minutes of the Senate's first session show that on Wednesday, November 30, at 3 p. m., "Mr. Horton presented a petition from Charles LeBarron and G. W. Bonnell. Referred to the committee on the judiciary."[20] Nothing more is known about Bonnell's petition or of any action taken by the Senate.

Settling in Houston

A primary problem facing the First Congress at Columbia was the selection of a permanent seat of government. Despite haggling between Senate and House committees over proposals of San Jacinto and Nacogdoches, a noncomittal act was approved November 14 providing simply for relocation of the capital; at this point competition between cities was intensified until the Allen brothers calmed feelings with their offer of Houston, which they had begun building on the site of devastated Harrisburg. Prospects at Houston of government buildings, lodgings, and cultural benefits were too handsome, and Congress passed an act December 15 authorizing the move. Houston was designated the

seat of government until the end of the congressional session of 1840.[21] George Bonnell lived in Houston off and on from 1837 through the summer of 1839 -- he never called another city home, but most of his time was spent traveling on horseback through the Republic, obtaining information for reports to the Telegraph and Texas Register and material for the book he would write in 1840. Houston, it may be said, was merely his headquarters.

One of the first things Bonnell did in 1837 was to take a trip to New Orleans. On June 3 he was one of 34 men who expressed thanks in the Telegraph and Texas Register to Captain Edward Auld, commander of the steam ship Constitution, for a safe journey ". . . on her late trip from New Orleans to this place." The trip must have been unique, since the passengers praised Auld for having accomplished ". . . the first successful trip with a steamboat of this class from New Orleans to the capital of this republic . . . under circumstances of great difficulty and some danger. . . ." Soon, Bonnell began a tour of Texas, and the Telegraph of September 30 expressed appreciation to Bonnell for a written description of Milam County, located northwest of present Travis County. The article, published under a headline, "Geography of Texas," contained an account of the boundaries, streams, forests, soil, towns, climate, and minerals of the area. Before striking out for Milam County, however, Bonnell had taken a short trip to Columbia July 4 and 5 and wrote in Houston on July 9 a letter to Dr. Ashbel Smith (see illustrations) regarding a mutual acquaintance he had met there.[22]

Houston early began booming. A mere village of mud, tents, and log cabins late in 1836, Houston boasted a population of almost 500 when San Jacinto Day celebrations were held in April, 1837.[23] A traveler to the city, at the junction of White Oak and Buffalo bayous, that year remarked that main street had two large, 2-story hotels, several 2-story businesses, one block of 11 stores, a number of 2-story homes, and the capitol.[24] The regular session of the Second Congress convened there for little more than a month, beginning May 1, and in the summer the town was incorporated by the Republic. By the end of 1837 alone, Houston had grown to 1,500 residents.[25] The weekly Telegraph and Texas Register, which had been published at Columbia from August, 1836, moved to Houston in late April, 1837, and printed its first issue there on May 2. By December, Bonnell was back in the capital anticipating the new year, the busiest he would spend while based in Houston. Before the old year was out, however, Bonnell was one of 26 Texans who formed the Philosophical Society of Texas on

Houston, July 9th 1837

Dr Smith:

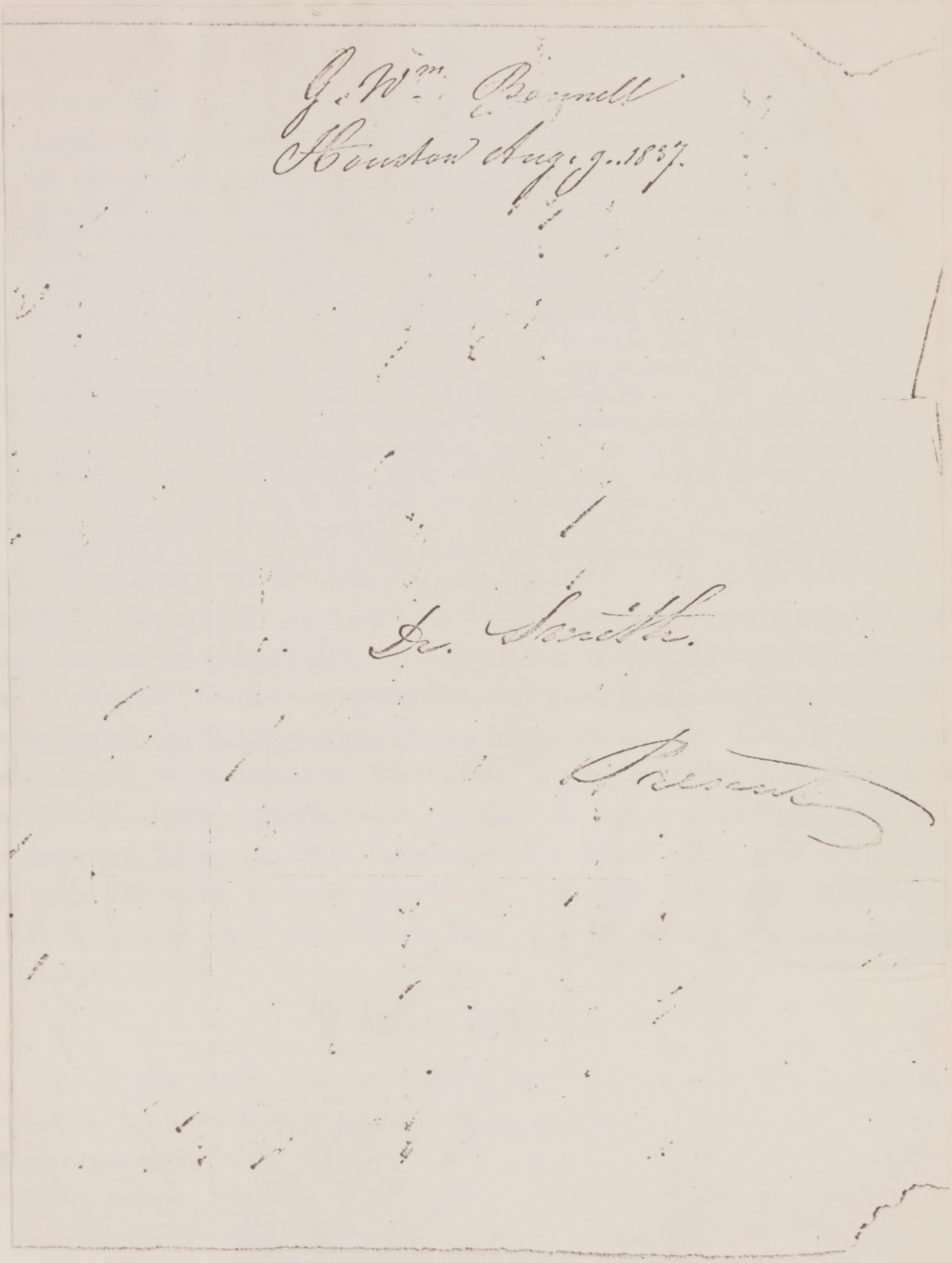
I was in Columbia on the fourth & fifth inst. when I saw Dr Goodrich. He was frequently in my presence, though I did not speak to him. He frequently alluded to the duel between him & Lawrence, & said that he was still of opinion that "Lawrence had stolen his money." This, & one more circumstance as I learned on my arrival here, that he had said prior to his leaving this place, that "He was fully satisfied that Lawrence was innocent!"

Gov. Robinson & Sterling C. Robinson were more in his company than I was, & I have no doubt, but they heard much more of his conversation on the subject than I did.

Respectfully

Geo. W. Bonnell

Letter From George Bonnell to Ashbel Smith
(Dated at Houston, July 9, 1837)



Reverse Side of Letter From Bonnell to Smith
(Facsimile Is Right Half of Letter;
Note Discrepancy in Dates)

December 5.[26] Lamar was elected president of the group, and Ashbel Smith, Anson Jones, Joseph Rowe, and David S. Kaufman served as vice-presidents.[27] Having been passed over as an officer, Bonnell was the eighth charter member to affix his signature to the memorial the club adopted at the first meeting:

> We the undersigned form ourselves into a society for the collection and diffusion of knowledge -- subscribing fully to the opinion of Lord Chancellor Bacon, that "knowledge is power"; . . . our object . . . at the present time is to concentrate the efforts of the enlightened and patriotic citizens of Texas . . . in the collection and diffusion of correct information regarding the moral and social condition of our country; its finances, statistics, and political and military history; its climate, soil and productions . . . and the thousand other topics of interest which our new and rising republic unfolds to the philosopher, the scholar, and the man of the world. . . . We have endeavored to respond to this call by the formation of this society, with the hope that if not to us, to our sons and successors it may be given to make the star, the single star of the West, as resplendent for all the acts that adorn civilized life as it is now glorious in military renown. Texas has her captains, let her have her wise men.[28]

Occasional meetings of the society were held during annual sessions of Congress, and the club apparently became inactive before the end of the Republic.[29] Most of the club's meeting time was spent listening to speeches.[30] The Telegraph and Texas Register responded on January 13, 1838, by publishing announcements of formation of the society, a list of officers, and the preamble to the club's constitution. Notice of the society was taken also by the Matagorda Bulletin with a lengthy essay on the philosophy of civilization that appeared in the issue of January 31. The society followed the capital to Austin, and at least one meeting there was announced in the Texas Sentinel on January 29, 1840.

Indian Fighter

In the spring and early summer of 1838 Bonnell again was roaming through Texas, and the Telegraph and Texas Register issues of June 16 and 23 indicate the Major had concentrated his travels in the area around San Patricio and San Antonio. In an official capacity, Bonnell's first connection with Texas Indians came when he was named Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Republic and assigned by President Houston on June 30 the task of seeking out information and preparing a report for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Congress on the status of Indian relations. How far and for how long Bonnell was required to travel obtaining his data is not known, but his official report, a 15-page document measuring approximately 5x8 inches and printed in the Telegraph office, was submitted November 3, 1838. Addressing his report to the Secretary of War,

Bonnell stated that he had relied little on hearsay, ". . . but have, in most instances, visited the tribes in person, or derived my information from the stationary Agents."[31] The document, which one Texas bibliographer has termed "the most important report we have upon the Indian tribes of Texas,"[32] advocated a harsh, unfaltering policy toward the Indians, although Bonnell refers with approval to Houston's message to Congress in May of that year in which the President defended treaty rights of the tribes.[33] Houston's generally pacifistic attitude toward the Indians, however, must have been extremely unsettling to Bonnell and probably contributed most to cause his disaffection with Houston and his union with Lamar. In the latter, Bonnell found an ally. Elected President in December, 1838, Lamar remained notoriously severe toward the Indians, and Albert Sidney Johnston, then Lamar's secretary of war, agreed wholeheartedly.[34] Bonnell, one historian writes, "could see no good whatever in the Indians. . . ."[35] Presented to Congress by Houston on November 15, the report was referred to, nevertheless, with apparent approval by the President in his message to Congress delivered the same day.[36] Bonnell began by estimating that the number of Indians residing in the Republic was approximately 30,000, of whom 26,450 were designated as being "wild."[37] The wild bands lived north and west of San Antonio, and 3,750 apparently relatively peaceful red men were residing on the Trinity River and between that stream and the Red River. Approximately 700 were living on or near the coast.[38] Bonnell was indignant at efforts of Mexicans to stir up the tribes:

> . . . most of them have sagacity enough to know, that the White Man and the Indian cannot flourish in the same vicinity. This feeling has been fanned and kept alive by Mexican emissaries; who have furnished them with arms and ammunition, and urged every argument in their power to impel the Indians to wage an exterminating war against the country. They have even gone so far as to make an offer of the whole territory to the Indians. . . .[39]

Bonnell's first policy statement came when he advised citizens of steps that should be taken when any tribe refused to surrender members suspected of some depredation on the whites:

> . . . the chief and several of the head men of the tribe should be seized, and held as hostages, until <u>they</u> designate and <u>deliver up</u> the criminals. They should be taught distinctly to understand, that any depredation <u>will be punished</u>, . . . But we may expect a continued repetition of such scenes so long as we suffer them to go unpunished. . . . we should demand an equal number of their people for instant execution. This may to some appear a cruel remedy; but I believe it a just one, and the only way we can restrain savages.[40]

Singling out the Lipans, Bonnell added that a force of 20 Rangers might keep the Indians in check, or else the Texans might take and keep as hostages a number of the children of the principal families. "It is submitted to your consideration and the wisdom of Congress, whether the government should incur even this expense to watch a band of known outlaws and robbers, or visit them at once with their retribution. . . ."[41] Bonnell's disillusionment with Houston's policy was first apparent in the report when Bonnell commented that the Indians and their cruel acts ". . . have heretofore been preserved by the clemency of this government, but good offices appear to be lost on such a people."[42] Referring to a visit with a Comanche tribe, Bonnell reveals that he had had to leave San Antonio in early May and ride almost 130 miles in order to arrange his meeting.[43]

Bonnell's general policy statements regarding the course he saw fit for the Republic to pursue in Indian relations consumes the last two pages of his report. Stating unequivocably that the Republic should enter into no treaty with any tribe before giving that band "a good chastising," Bonnell recommended that ". . . a sufficient force of mounted men be raised as quick as possible, to march into their own country, and attack their villages, that they might feel the force of war in all its horrors. . . ."[44] He advised Congress to enact laws making illicit trade with Indians "a high crime and misdemeanor," especially trade of any sort by persons not licensed by the Republic. Approved traders should be prevented from supplying arms and ammunition, and Texas' minister at Washington should inform the United States of contraband trade in weapons then going on between persons in that nation and the Indians of Texas.[45]

> After that, I would recommend the establishment of Block and Trading Houses, across our whole northern and western frontier. . . .
>
> During my western and northern tour, I selected several places, which I thought suitable for Block Houses. But it would probably give more satisfaction to have commissioners appointed for that purpose, who would have an opportunity of making a more thorough examination of the country.[46]

Bonnell's somewhat lofty vision was of a chain of forts, none of which would be more than 40 miles apart, and each of which would be manned by a company of 56 men acting either as rangers or stationary troops. Men would be enlisted for three years and would be required to spend a portion of their time raising corn for their own food. "For this they might receive a little extra pay."[47] The troops would be armed "with the old-fashioned rifle, with a flint lock, and so constructed as to admit the use of the bayonet."[48]

> Those Block Houses should be stationed in the Indian country, above all our settlements, and the Indians should not be allowed to come below them without a passport from the resident agent. I think it would be good policy to unite the offices of Agent and Trader, in the same individual, and make it his duty to reside at the Block House, and keep a good assortment of Indian goods always on hand. In order to make it an object worthy the enterprise of men of good character, I would recommend that they be allowed to introduce their goods duty free.[49]

In order to effect "a chain of constant vigilance," Bonnell suggested that the militia be strictly organized to act as patrols around and between the forts. "Each post should also be furnished with a piece of artillery, as it would not only serve to frighten the Indians, but would serve as an alarm gun in case it was necessary to call out the militia." The report was signed, "I have the honor to be, Very Respectfully, Your ob't serv't, GEORGE W. BONNELL, Commissioner Indian Affairs."[50]

Bonnell's report furnished also several short accounts of Indian outrages, treacheries, and a battle at Kickapoo Village on October 16, 1838, in which 200 Texans had successfully engaged a band of Caddoes, Cherokees, and other Indians of the northeast.[51] A great majority of the report, however, is devoted to lengthy descriptions of every tribe Bonnell was able to visit or for which he secured reliable information. He spared no details, seeming to delight in telling of strange customs and barbarism. Practically all of the 20-page chapter on Indians, amended to his Topographical Description of Texas published in Austin two years later, was copied and condensed from his 1838 Report. By comparison, his stories in the 1840 work show signs of some rewriting and polishing, but the gist of his tales remained the same. Of the approximately 1,500 Comanches then residing in the northwestern portion of the Republic, Bonnell proffered lively comments:

> They are a wandering race, having no settled residence, but following the buffalo from place to place. They do not pretend to cultivate the soil, but derive their support from the buffalo, and what they can steal from other people. As for honesty and integrity they know not the meaning of the word -- they are a nation of robbers, and would at any time murder a man for the value of one farthing, provided they could do it without running any risk of danger themselves. But they go upon the principle that the life of one Comanche is worth more than the destruction of any number of their enemies, and they never make an attack unless they can do it with entire impunity. . . .
>
> They think intrigue to be far more praise worthy than valor; and if a traveller can be murdered in his sleep, the author of his destruction gains more glory than if he had taken a scalp in open combat. . . . A Comanche is mighty in a rout -- but a great coward in

> a charge, and will never fight if there be any possibility of running; if hemmed, like other wild beasts, they will some times fight desperately.[52]
>
> . . .
>
> The Comanches are a nation of cannibals, and the unfortunate victim who falls into their hands, is not unfrequently devoured with as little ceremony as the buffalo. They are the most superstitious people in the world: they believe in charms and witchcraft, and not unfrequently sacrifice human offerings to appease the anger of their gods.[53]

Closing his statement on the Comanches, Bonnell sardonically noted the tribal structure:

> Their system of government is the most perfect democracy on the face of the earth. A chief is created or disposed at pleasure; even children may rebel against their parents, who have no right to punish them without a vote of the tribe. A mother forfeits her life if she strikes her male child, however young he may be; because a warrior or brave must be bred up in all the savage ferocity of his nature. But a male may beat a woman, or even take her life, with impunity. They in turn beat their female children with the utmost severity; and are the cruelist tormentors of the unhappy prisoners who may chance to fall into their hands.[54]

The Carancahuas, numbering then only approximately 100, 25 of whom were said to be warriors, lived ". . . on the western portion of the coast . . . about the La Baca bay or the Aransas."[55] These Indians were described as useful to the western people of the Republic on account of their trade in venison and fish.

> They have once been a very powerful nation --and were more celebrated for their bravery than any other tribe of the south-western Indians; but their continued wars with Mexico and the wild Indians and the early American settlers of this country have reduced them to a mere handful, and their spirits have met with a corresponding depression.[56]

A wandering tribe of approximately 300 Tonkahuas, enemies of the Comanches, were ". . . entirely dependent upon the indulgence of the white people; but neither fear nor interest can restrain them from their natural inclinations of theft and plunder."[57] Bonnell called the Lipans ". . . the most intelligent and respectable of all the native Texas Indians. . . ."[58] Living on the Nueces River, the Lipans numbered roughly 150 and also were enemies of the Comanche.[59] Four other native tribes Bonnell noted included the Bedies, Towacanies, Wacoes, and Pawnee Picts, or Toweashes. "The tribes already spoken of, compose the whole strength of the native Indians of Texas, except about four thousand Appachies [sic], who reside high up the Rio Grande, so

far removed from our settlements, that they never visit them."[60]

In Houston to file his Report by early November, Bonnell soon had his first opportunity to take the field against the Indians he had attacked so far only on paper. Acknowledging current Indian depredations on the upper Brazos near present-day Marlin in Brazos and Grimes counties,[61] a public meeting of citizens of Houston and surrounding vicinity met in the Senate chamber of the capitol on November 7 to decide what measures should be taken. General Mosely Baker was elected chairman and Bonnell served as secretary as the members resolved to cooperate with the militia under Major General Thomas Rusk "to avenge the murder of our fellow citizens by Indians of the northwestern frontier" who were threatening also citizens then residing in the north and east. The men concluded with a vote that Houstonians would respond to Rusk's request for 250 volunteers.[62] At about the same time, Mosely Baker issued brigade orders giving Bonnell command of 250 mounted men from Baker's second brigade:

> The war now raging with the Indians . . . has assumed an aspect which requires the united co-operation of all parts of Texas to quell. . . . Gen. Rusk is now in the field with a portion of the Third Brigade . . . The Gen. of this Brigade has been ordered by Gen. Rusk to march to his assistance with two hundred and fifty mounted men . . . Maj. Geo. W. Bonnell has been detailed for the command.[63]

Three days later the Telegraph and Texas Register announced that a company of 55 men had left Washington-on-the-Brazos two weeks before to join Rusk at Fort Houston and that 65 members of the Milam Guards, a group of light riflemen organized in the capital the previous March,[64] "will leave to-morrow for Fort Houston, and it is expected . . . the militia will soon follow them, to be under the command of . . . Bonnel [sic]."[65] Bonnell still was in Houston four days later as the Telegraph and Texas Register of November 14 carried an announcement, signed by Bonnell as secretary pro tem, of a meeting of the Philosophical Society in the capitol that same evening, "at early candle-light." From Bonnell's standpoint, his Indian campaign, which lasted from mid-November through January, 1839, must have been a failure, for his brigade did not on any occasion engage the enemy. A full account of the march, nevertheless, has been left by Francis R. Lubbock in his Six Decades in Texas. As a charter member of the Milam Guards and then acting as the group's comptroller, Lubbock obtained permission from Houston to join Bonnell's battalion. "In compliment to the Milam Guards perhaps, as well as to myself, Major Bonnell appointed me his adjutant."[66] Although Bonnell, having been named commander, may have walked down Houston

streets "with . . . grace," dressed in regimental blue "with laced collar above the ears and spangled tail below the knees," as one critic observed in 1840,[67] Bonnell's appearance to Lubbock, as has been mentioned, was motley. Lubbock concedes, however, that Bonnell "made us a good and intelligent commander to the end of the expedition."[68] The brigade left Houston "in a very wet and cold time" without tents and several days later was burdened at night by heavy sleet. After several days' march, a courier arrived bringing orders to report to Rusk at Nacogdoches in order to punish the Cherokees; these orders were reversed as the group neared that town and the battalion proceeded on its original course to the Brazos.[69]

> We were quite disgusted at this command, for we felt assured the Cherokees would fight and there would be an opportunity to gain a little military glory -- a kind of glory that most Texans desired in those days.[70]

Prior to receiving orders to retrace their steps, the men had prepared to camp near Nacogdoches. The owner of the land arrived to tell Bonnell that if he were to go only a short distance farther he would find a government fort with plenty of supplies and feed for the horses. "We acted on his suggestion, -- found it twice as far as he said it was, and reached the fort far in the night, worn out and tired."[71]

> Next morning a detail was made to visit the hospitable patriot who had deceived us the night before. We took with us from the fort three wagons and ox teams. On reaching the place we saw seated upon the gallery the hospitable man of the night before and several others, all well armed.[72]

Bonnell proceeded to barter for corn and fodder and despite "much protesting and some threatening," the brigade filled the wagons and issued receipts for the feed. Lubbock commented:

> So you will see that even in those early days there were men . . . who did not care to furnish to the soldiers defending the frontier the subsistence so necessary to keep them in the field and render them efficient. I presume this patriot also got his money without interest some ten years later.[73]

On at least one other occasion, the brigade was equally misled by a disgruntled farmer afraid of having the men forage on his property.[74] Lubbock wrote that at one time, famished for water, the men killed four buffalo near the headwaters of the San Gabriel and drank blood after the animals' throats had been slit. A butcher in the company advised that the blood tasted like new milk just from a cow. "All of the others drank a great deal of it and were nauseated in consequence. I was the last to try it."[75] Another problem facing many of

the men was lack of tobacco. "Sometimes the boys would get out of tobacco and go almost crazy for the want of it. It seemed to be greater suffering than hunger or thirst."[76] Lubbock summed up the experience of the campaigners:

> We did constant ranging on the Brazos, Little River, and the Gabriels, and even more territory. At the falls of the Brazos, near Marlin, we built a fort, more for the protection of the families in that section than for ourselves. . . .
>
> . . .
>
> We had many alarms, yet no fights with the Indians; but doubtless this ranging on the frontier protected the settlers and their stock. There was no killing and no stealing while our command was on duty.
>
> Our campaign was a hard one, for it was winter all the time and the weather was cold and rainy, while our clothing and blankets grew thinner and threadbare and ragged as our exposure continued. However, this was to be expected, and when our time was out we were returning home light-hearted and happy. . . .[77]

Lubbock states earlier that the brigade had been ordered out for three months,[78] but apparently the men returned before that time had passed -- possibly because the Indian situation had proved fairly quiet. Upon their return to Houston in January, 1839, Bonnell's brigade presented a startling show:

> On leaving, we were well clothed, and though not in uniform, looked quite like holiday soldiers. Now the most of us were in rags. I remember well how . . . astonished my wife and friends were when they beheld me marching through town. The legs of my pants had disappeared, and I had made leggins of an old green . . . crumb cloth that I had taken with me for a horse cover. This I cut up and divided with the boys, for many of them were fully as bad off as myself.[79]

Bonnell and his men were in Houston by January 26, the date of an invitation to Sam Houston to be guest of honor at a ball, an announcement of which was signed by Bonnell and six other men and printed in the Telegraph and Texas Register on February 6. Houston, then preparing for a visit to the United States, cordially declined the festivities in the same issue of the paper.

An article in the Houston Daily Times of April 30, 1840, places much emphasis on Bonnell's relationship with Sam Houston and, though obviously prejudiced against Bonnell, at least suggests details of events that must have transpired in the winter of 1838-39. Houston had been succeeded in the presidency by Lamar while Bonnell's brigade was campaigning on the Brazos. Acknowledging that Bonnell had been one of the first settlers in Houston, the Times story asserts that Sam Houston at once had befriended Bonnell, "with whom he

frequently broke . . . bread. . . ." The article mentions Bonnell's Indian campaign and then attempts an explanation of Bonnell's break with Houston:

> Mr. Bonnell had, up to this time, been the abiding personal friend of Gen. Sam Houston; had recently held a valuable office under his administration in the Indian department; was his attendant and stirrup holder in his trips to Nacogdoches. But as Lamar's administration was about to be installed, he thought it advisable, by way of anointing and recommending himself to the favor of the new President, to relinquish the post and pay which he enjoyed under the former.[80]

The Times's statements must be taken in the light of the fact that, at the time of writing, the Houston paper and Bonnell's Texas Sentinel at Austin were engaged in a bitter editorial feud. The Times article reveals that the same Congress that accepted Bonnell's Indian affairs report in November, 1838, must have acted upon some of the Major's recommendations, as the article continues, "Congress had, whilst he was out on the frontier, provided for the raising of a regiment of regular troops and establishing a chain of military posts along the line of our frontier from the Red River to the Nueces." The Times declares further that a final break came when Bonnell asked for and was denied by Houston the position of serving as colonel of the regiment to command the forts. The validity of this accusation cannot be verified, but the gist of it may have been true. Colored with many shades of apparent bias, the Times concluded that Bonnell, having been refused the office of colonel, ". . . set himself down to the dirty work, in this 'mud hole' of Houston, as he calls our city, of abusing the man who could be so blind to his shining merits."[81]

> He was frequently heard to predict the downfall of this country under such auspices; and, in that moody melancholy in which he used to mope about the streets, he doubtless soliloquized after this manner: -- "If the country goes to the devil, it is the fault of the ineffable stupidity of a President who cannot see in my majestic form, and in the fiery glance of my eye, the warrior and the statesman."[82]

Bonnell's fervent belief in harsh Indian policy got him into one public scuffle in late 1838 with a former Indian agent, Jefferson Wright, whom Bonnell accused of having "resigned his Indian Agency from fear." Two fist fights ensued, and "our informant reported that Wright acted 'very properly & spirited,' and that 'he dared Bonnell to a 3rd contest before more than 300 people & abused him in the strongest manner.'"[83]

Unless from his military pay, Bonnell's source of income while in Houston remains a mystery. A newspaperman by vocation, Bonnell apparently intended to go into the publishing business as early as 1838, for in a letter to

Lamar at Brazoria, dated January 21, 1838, James Decatur Cocke reported, ". . . Bonnell is expecting a complete printing establishment, which he some time since ordered from Cincinatti [sic]. He, too, contemplates publishing a papers [sic] on an Imperial sheet. He has proposed to unite his project with mine."[84] Bonnell and Cocke may, indeed, have published a paper by the name of the Courier and Enquirer in Houston in the summer and fall of 1838. No copies have been located, and the paper is known only by two references that appeared in contemporary publications. On September 8, 1838, the Telegraph and Texas Register mentioned only that "The Courier & Enquirer of this city is now printed on a large double cylindered Napier press -- procured at great cost by its proprietors, and which strikes off six thousand of its enormous sheets per hour -- or one hundred every minute." Only one other reference to the paper, in the Civilian and Galveston Gazette of October 19, 1838, has been found. Bonnell, however, traveled a great deal during those same months and, if he did publish the paper with Cocke, perhaps was for the most part publisher in name only. Bonnell also may have helped edit J. Warren J. Niles's National Banner, published at Houston from April 25 until some time in December, 1838.[85] Only the first number of that paper is available, however, and does not suggest that Bonnell at the start was serving in any editorial capacity. The Matagorda Bulletin of March 28, 1838, printed a prospectus for the National Banner that stated the new paper would be "published on an Imperial sheet -- with entire new type." These plans for the Banner were at least coincidental with Bonnell's plans as related by Cocke in the Lamar letter. Bonnell's contemporary, Brown, states at least that Bonnell "edited a paper in 1838-9 in Houston."[86] That Bonnell may have been short of funds in the summer of 1838 is suggested by minutes of the first session of Congress, in the House, which report that in late August, "The joint resolution for the relief of G. W. Bonnell was taken up, on its second reading. On motion of Mr. Jack, the rule was suspended, the bill read third time by caption, and passed."[87] The bill was lost or was not approved by Houston, for H. P. N. Gammel's Laws of Texas, 1822-1897 does not contain any resolution approved for relief of Bonnell. The original 4-page petition, however, in Bonnell's own hand, has survived.[88] Dated November 14, 1837, and measuring approximately 8x13 inches, the memorial actually was presented to Congress the next month, more than eight months prior to consideration. In his petition, Bonnell asked to be reimbursed for expenses he had borne in bringing his volunteers to Texas in 1836. Referring to Houston's recommendation in December, 1836, that Bonnell disband his company, Bonnell stated: "It was

accordingly done, but not till they had cost your memorialist eight hundred & seventy five dollars, in bringing them to the country, & supporting them while here."[89] Bonnell asserted that neither he nor any member of his company ever had asked for or received any payment, in land or money, for their services. Bonnell concluded that he was not able to furnish vouchers to verify his expenses, ". . . but in crossing the Colorado river last summer after night, he lost his saddle bags and all his papers."[90] On the page opposite Bonnell's signature are signed statements by Sam Houston and two of the volunteers, A. M. Tomkins and William M. Shepherd, dated November 5, 1837, attesting to Bonnell's claim. Tomkins added that he had seen Bonnell ". . . always pay the expenses of the company he had with him and also knowing of his purchasing for them several horses when they had lost theirs."[91] Shepherd commented that he was convinced the amount Bonnell asked was not too large. A notation on the back reveals that Bonnell's petition was read before Congress on December 8 and then referred the next day to the committee on claims and accounts.[92]

Bonnell was off again on horseback in the spring of 1839. The Telegraph and Texas Register of March 20 reported:

> We are indebted to . . . Bonnell for several specimens of Minerals from the banks of the Colorado, near Bastrop. Among them are a beautiful specimen of native Copper, of fibrous Malachite and of crystalized Gypsum. He has informed us, that near the locality of these minerals, he noticed a quarry of excellent marble, and an extensive bed of Iron ore.

An advertisement in the Telegraph of April 10 places Bonnell back in the capital by that time. William M. Shepherd, D. Y. Portiss, and Bonnell were named Houston agents of Smallwood S. B. Fields, attorney-at-law, La Grange. A "Railroad Meeting" gathered in Houston in the capitol at 4 p. m. on Saturday, April 27, and accepted a motion by Bonnell that various committees in the Republic then considering projects to bring the train to Texas would meet at the town of Fayettville on June 1. Bonnell and William M. Bronaugh were appointed a committee of two ". . . to ascertain the most direct rout [sic] for the rail road in contemplation, and report the result to the general committee of conference at the time and place before mentioned."[93] Bonnell's concern with efforts to string rails through Texas is interesting, but no further indication that he followed up his project has been found. Bonnell apparently was not present at the June 1 meeting, and interested parties seem to have allowed the plans to fizzle out.[94]

George Bonnell's Petition to Congress for Relief

Delivered December 8, 1837

(Facsimile Is Lower Half of Page 2)

Your memorialist would only further remark, that he has vouchers to prove the correctness of this statement, but in crossing the Colorado river last summer after night, he lost his saddle bags and all his papers.

For the correctness of this statement you are referred to the ~~Certificates of the~~ President — ~~&~~ to Wm. M. Shepherd, & ~~to~~ ~~Hon~~ M. Tompkins, Esq.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Geo. W. Bonnell

Nov. 14th 1837

I hereby certify that the facts
set forth in the aforesaid
memorial by Capt Bonnell in
regard to the arrival of his com
corps at Nacogdoches & his
supporting them while there
I believe to be correct. The
claim amounting to eight hundred
~~Nov 5th 1837~~
and seventy five dollars.

Nov. 5th 1837 Sam Houston

Sam Houston's Verification of Bonnell's Petition
(Facsimile Is Upper Half of Page 3)

Union With Jacob Cruger

Of much concern to the Republic that spring was the selection of a permanent site for the capital. At Columbia, Burnet's choice, the first administration of the constitution had begun in 1836. Houston had seen the capital moved to his namesake city in 1837, specifying that the seat of government would not be moved again before 1840. With Lamar in office after December 1, 1838, Sam Houston's plans went awry. Commissions Houston had appointed just before he left office to recommend favorable sites were replaced soon by commissions of Lamar supporters. Lamar intended to place his capital between the Trinity and Colorado rivers, and an act which designated that general region also erased earlier provisions that would have prevented relocation before the next year. On April 13, 1839, five commissioners drafted a report recommending a small town named Waterloo, on the east bank of the Colorado approximately 35 miles west of Bastrop. The new capital would be called Austin, and Edwin Waller, who would be first mayor, was named government agent to supervise the sale of city lots beginning August 1.[95] There must have been no doubt in Bonnell's mind that he would follow his President to Austin.

For the purpose of relocating there, Bonnell allied himself with Jacob W. Cruger, also a native of New York, who by that time owned the Telegraph and Texas Register and the Morning Star in Houston. The pair designed moving to Austin with the Congress to become public printers for 1840 and to establish a newspaper. By November, Bonnell and Cruger had drafted a prospectus for their paper, calling it first the Texas Centinel. The paper actually appeared on January 15, 1840, as the Texas Sentinel. Cruger was expanding his newspaper chain -- Bonnell was back where he had not been for some time, at the helm of his own paper. Bonnell lingered in Houston into September, preparing for the trip and writing letters. C. F. Fisher, an official of the Western Carolinian newspaper at Salisbury, North Carolina, wrote Ashbel Smith at Houston on September 27 regarding a letter he had received from Bonnell ". . . a few days ago . . . dated from your city. . . ." Fisher stated that Bonnell had written him ". . . complaining of an article in our paper some time ago in reference to himself."

> The letter is written in a respectful manner, & proper spirit, and therefore deserves prompt attention. We are not the author of the report referred to and if in noticing it, we have done injustice to Mr. Bonnel [sic], we shall certainly take pleasure in repairing the injury -- fully.[96]

That Bonnell would dash off a letter complaining of an inaccurate story pub-

lished by a paper hundreds of miles away was a fair hint of what he would do from Austin with Texas editors.

Footnotes

[1]A handwritten letter (see illustration, this chapter) from Bonnell to Ashbel Smith, dated July 9, 1837, furnishes the only proof this author could find to indicate that Bonnell's middle name was William. On the outside return address, (the letter was addressed on the reverse side, no envelope was used), Bonnell signed his name "G. Wm. Bonnell." No other reference cited in this thesis mentions Bonnell's middle name.

[2]John Henry Brown and William S. Speer, The Encyclopedia of the New West (Marshall, Texas: The United States Bibliographical Publishing Company, 1881), p. 574. Cited hereafter as Brown and Speer Encyclopedia.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Frank Brown, "Annals of Travis County and of the City of Austin," (Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center Archives Collection, The University of Texas, Austin, 1954), Ch. VI, p. 62. (Typewritten.) Cited hereafter as Brown's "Annals."

[5]J. L. Sinks, "Journalists of Austin in 1840," in Galveston News, May 7, 1876.

[6]Francis R. Lubbock, Six Decades in Texas, ed. C. W. Raines (Austin: Ben C. Jones & Co., 1900), p. 85.

[7]Brown and Speer Encyclopedia, p. 574.

[8]Winifred Gregory, (ed.), American Newspapers, 1821-1936: A Union List of Files Available in the United States and Canada (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1937), p. 13; also, Walter Prescott Webb, et al. (eds.), The Handbook of Texas (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1952), I, p. 356, apparently is incorrect in stating that Bonnell was in Selma in 1827 editing The Argus, as Gregory does not indicate that a Southern Argus began at Selma prior to 1869.

[9]Gregory, p. 13.

[10]Ibid., p. 9.

[11]Ibid., p. 344.

[12]Discussed in detail in chapter 2.

[13]Memorial of G. W. Bonnell, Petitioner, Relief for Services Rendered, Nov. 14, 1837, Delivered to Congress of the Republic of Texas on Dec. 8, 1837, contained at Texas State Archives and Library, Austin. (Handwritten.) Cited hereafter as Bonnell Memorial. This petition, in which Bonnell asked the Republic for $875, contains, in addition, handwritten statements of Sam Houston, Augustus M. Tomkins, and William M. Shepherd.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

[16]William Ransom Hogan, The Texas Republic: A Social and Economic History (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), p. 5.

[17]Bonnell Memorial.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Rupert Norval Richardson, Texas: The Lone Star State (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1943), pp. 144-145.

[20]Telegraph and Texas Register (Columbia), Dec. 6, 1836.

[21]Stanley Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, 1836-1845 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1956), pp. 57-58.

[22]Letter from George W. Bonnell to Ashbel Smith, July 9, 1837, Ashbel Smith Papers (Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center Archives Collection, The University of Texas, Austin), Box A 14/145. Cited hereafter as Smith Papers.

[23]Houston, A History and Guide, Compiled by Writers' Program, Work Projects Administration, State of Texas (Houston: Anson Jones Press, 1949), pp. 42-43. Cited hereafter as Houston.

[24]Siegel, p. 68.

[25]Houston, pp. 45-47.

[26]Philosophical Society of Texas, The, (Dallas: The Philosophical Society of Texas, 1949), p. 1. Cited hereafter as Philosophical Society of Texas.

[27]Lubbock, p. 68.

[28]Philosophical Society of Texas, pp. 2-4.

[29]Webb, II, p. 373.

[30]Hogan, p. 164.

[31]George W. Bonnell, Report, A Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the First Session of the Third Congress of the Republic of Texas, Nov. 3, 1838, Published by Order of Congress (photocopy; Houston: Telegraph and Texas Register Office, 1838), p. 1. Cited hereafter as Bonnell Report.

[32]Thomas W. Streeter, Bibliography of Texas, 1795-1845, Part I: Texas Imprints (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), I, p. 219.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Richardson, p. 153.

[35]Ibid., pp. 153-154.

[36]Streeter, p. 219.

[37]Bonnell Report, p. 1.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid., p. 4.

[41]Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[42]Ibid., p. 5.

[43]Ibid., p. 6.

[44]Ibid., p. 14.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[47]Ibid., p. 15.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[52]George W. Bonnell, Topographical Description of Texas. To Which is Added an Account of the Indian Tribes (reprint; Waco: Texian Press, 1964; first published in 1840: Austin: Clark, Wing, and Brown), pp. 130-131.

[53]Ibid., p. 136.

[54]Ibid., pp. 136-137.

[55]Ibid., p. 137.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Ibid., pp. 137-138.

[58]Ibid., p. 138.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Ibid., pp. 139-140.

[61]Lubbock, p. 84.

[62]Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston), Nov. 11, 1838.

[63]Streeter, p. 218.

[64]Webb, p. 192.

[65]Telegraph and Texas Register, Nov. 10, 1838.

[66]Lubbock, pp. 84-85.

[67]Daily Times (Houston), April 30, 1840.

[68]Lubbock, p. 85.

[69]Ibid., pp. 85-86.

[70]Ibid., p. 86.

[71]Ibid., p. 87; the fort Lubbock mentions may have been Fort Houston, approximately 60 miles west of Nacogdoches: see also Webb, I, p. 627.

[72]Lubbock, p. 88.

[73]Ibid.

[74]Ibid., pp. 86-87.

[75]Ibid., p. 88.

[76]Ibid., p. 89.

[77]Ibid., pp. 88-89.

[78]Ibid., p. 85.

[79]Ibid., p. 89.

[80]Daily Times, April 30, 1840.

[81]Ibid.

[82]Ibid.

[83]Hogan, p. 271.

[84]Charles Adams Gulick Jr. and Katherine Elliott, (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar (Austin: Texas State Library, 1922), II, pp. 28-29.

[85]Webb, II, p. 260.

[86]Brown and Speer Encyclopedia, p. 574.

[87]Telegraph and Texas Register, "Supplement" to Aug. 4, 1838.

[88]Bonnell Memorial.

[89]Ibid.

[90]Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Telegraph and Texas Register, May 1, 1839.

[94] Ibid., June 12, 1839.

[95] Siegel, pp. 111-112.

[96] Letter from C. F. Fisher to Ashbel Smith, Sept. 27, 1839, Smith Papers.

CHAPTER II

THE MOVE TO AUSTIN

George Bonnell, in Austin by the fall of 1839, was on hand to welcome President Mirabeau B. Lamar to the new capital at a party given at Bullock's Hotel on the evening of October 17. In that building, ". . . corner Avenue and Pecan, a sumptuous dinner was partaken of, nearly all citizens who had been unable to join the calvacade for want of horse, participating in the repast. All the people tendered their respects to the chief magistrate."[1] With the arrival of the government archives in late September[2] and the construction of a simple, wooden capitol building, the Fourth Congress of the Republic convened in Austin on November 11.[3] Less than a month later, Bonnell and Jacob Cruger were elected public printers for 1840. Submitting their bid on December 6, the pair agreed "to print the Laws and Journals of the present Congress for thirty per cent less than the sum allowed . . . for printing the laws and journals of the last Congress."[4] Bonnell and Cruger furthermore offered to give bond ". . . in the sum of ten or twenty thousand dollars" in assurance that they would have a printing office at Austin since, the men explained, "they now have a complete printing establishment in readiness to be brought to this city, and have been prevented from bringing it at an earlier day on account of the state of the roads. It will probaly [sic] arrive in a few days."[5] The reason they could afford to do the public printing cheaper than their predecessor was because they owned a large Machine Power Press, "which diminishes, in a great degree, the expense of the press work."[6] The election of Bonnell and Cruger was confirmed by the Telegraph and Texas Register on January 9, 1840:

> The Austin City Gazette, after a suspension of three weeks has made its appearance again, under date of the 25th of December. We were somewhat surprised to observe an article in that paper announcing the election . . . of its publisher, Major Samuel Whiting, public printer for 1840, without mentioning the reconsideration of the vote, which took place the same day. On the reconsideration Cruger & Bonnell . . . were elected by a majority of six votes over Maj. Whiting, and were at the time of publication of that article, and are now public printers for 1840. Such pitiful attempts to gain importance in the eyes of the community, are altogether unworthy a conductor of the public press.

Although George Bonnell had moved to Austin primarily to edit the Texas Sentinel, which made its first bow to the public on January 15, 1840,

he found time as well to engage in civic affairs of the new capital as keenly as he had participated previously in Houston. He was named a charter member in January, 1840, of the Texas Patriotic and Philanthropic Society, designated by its constitution as a "Benevolent Association" organized for the purpose of distributing funds ". . . for the relief of widows, and the education of orphans of those who have fallen, and may yet fall in our various battles with the Mexicans and Indians."[7] The society was directed to meet annually on January 1 at the seat of government and at other times and places which the group later might choose. New members were required to pay a $5 fee and yearly dues of $5, or an advance of $25 for a life membership. At the organizational meeting, Bonnell was elected corresponding secretary, ". . . to draft all the communications of the Society and to answer all epistles . . . to the same."[8] Officers were chosen for 4-year terms.[9]

Records show that Bonnell owned one slave, a personal servant, and that the Major voted three times in 1840 Austin elections -- on February 21, August 8, and September 7.[10] James David Carter, in his Masonry in Texas: Background, History, and Influence to 1846, refers to Bonnell on five occasions as a Mason,[11] but it is likely that Bonnell had become a Mason before he entered Texas in 1836. In a letter to the author, the assistant librarian of the Grand Lodge of Texas Library in Waco writes, ". . . he affiliated with Austin Lodge no. 12 in 1840 and demitted or left the lodge in 1841."[12] To supplement his income from the Sentinel, Bonnell worked occasionally for the Land Office as a Spanish translator.[13] By early spring, 1840, Bonnell had joined the Travis Guards, a local militia group organized ". . . for home protection and speedy campaign work against Indians who made frequent incursions into the town about that time."[14] In the 16-page Constitution and By-Laws of the Travis Guards: Adopted March First, 1840, which was printed by Bonnell and Cruger, Bonnell was one of 40 Austinites listed as privates.[15] The preamble stated that the men had organized ". . . in order to cultivate mutual friendship and intercourse, and to establish an easy method of obtaining knowledge of the military science."[16] Company parades were held on the first Saturday of every month, and drills were conducted at the discretion of the commanding officer. Regular meetings took place on the last Monday of each month, "at early candle light."[17] No "unbecoming language" was allowed of any member while on duty; any man who arrived for a parade intoxicated was fined $5, as was anyone ". . . who shall be found intoxicated after parade, with his uniform on. . . ."[18] Furthermore, a member was obliged to be out of uniform within one hour after a parade.[19]

On at least two occasions, in May and again in June, the Travis Guards were summoned to the vicinity of San Antonio to assist in quelling Indian disturbances there, and George Bonnell, not one to pass up the chance for a good fight, went along. Consequently, he missed editing three issues of the Sentinel. The campaigns, however, apparently were not successful, for the Brazos Courier reported on June 9, 1840, "The Travis Guards . . . have returned and report all quiet. The Comanches are invisible." Eventually, the Travis Guards were incorporated by an act of the Fifth Congress on January 23, 1841, ". . . with the same powers and privileges as are conferred . . . incorporating the 'Milam Guards' of the City of Houston."[20] Bonnell took time as well to write an emigrant's guide to Texas, which was published at the Sentinel office in April, 1840.[21]

An Editor at Work

Despite his avocation as an Indian fighter, George Bonnell was by vocation a newspaperman -- more specifically, a newspaper editor. Volume 1, number 1 of the Texas Sentinel, Austin's second newspaper, published ". . . for a time . . . in Custard's Building south of the state department on the west side of the Avenue,"[22] made its appearance on January 15, 1840, edited by Bonnell and published by Cruger. From that date, with only three exceptions, Bonnell edited a complete volume of the paper -- 52 issues -- until December 12, 1840. In addition, Bonnell was publisher from late July, when his partnership with Cruger was dissolved and the latter returned to Houston. The Sentinel first was issued semi-weekly through number 9 on February 12; issues beginning February 19 were published weekly. Under Bonnell's management, the Sentinel consistently appeared as a 3-column, 4-page paper, with his editorials on page 2 or 3. The first issue boasted a small, quarter-inch nameplate, "TEXAS SENTINEL," in all-capital letters. Below the nameplate were two folio lines: the upper line read, "By Cruger and Bonnell, Public Printers," in large and small capital letters; the paper's motto, "Veritas Vincit," in large-capital italics; and the price, "TERMS -- Five Dollars in Advance," in large and small capitals. The lower folio line had on the far left the volume number and on the far right the issue number; in the middle were the place and date of publication, "CITY OF AUSTIN, WEDNESDAY MORNING, JANUARY 15, 1840," in large-capital letters. Overall measurements of the paper were 10x17 inches, with each column approximately 3¼ inches wide. No advertisements appeared on page 1 until the issue of April 8. Horizontal rules separated the folio lines and

PROSPECTUS

OF THE

TEXAS CENTINEL.

THE subscribers propose publishing in the *City of Austin*, a weekly newspaper, to be called the Texas Centinel.

We deem it unnecessary to publish a lengthy prospectus, or go into a labored exposition of the course which will be pursued by the paper; but will content ourselves by promising to use our endeavors to make it generally useful to the people of Texas.

The paper will be devoted to no man or set of men, neither for nor against the Administration; but will approve of the acts of this or any other Administration, which we conceive to be calculated to advance the interest of the country. When we find it our duty to oppose any measure of the Government, we shall state our objections frankly, avoiding invective and personal abuse.

The first number will appear during the early part of the present session of Congress, and be published regularly thereafter.

It will give regular accounts of the proceedings of Congress, with sketches of the debates on the most important subjects.

Terms—Five Dollars per annum. If paid in advance, Texas promissory notes will be taken at par.

GEO. W. BONNELL
J. W. CRUGER.

Austin, Nov 8, 1839, w&d-tf

Prospectus of Austin's Second Newspaper

(From the Telegraph and Texas Register, Feb. 5, 1840)

vertical rules were used throughout to divide the columns. A fairly large serif type was used for the body, and headlines generally were set in all-capital letters of a type slightly larger than that used for the body of the paper. Advertisements were introduced by an elephant-track, or large initial letter, and the paper on the whole boasted a good supply of both Roman and italic type, with large- and small-capital letters, all of the same font. It was apparent in the appearance of the first issue that Bonnell and Cruger had decided upon the spelling of "Sentinel" instead of "Centinel," as had appeared in their prospectus. Dated at Austin on November 8, 1839, the prospectus had been published by the Morning Star at Houston as early as November 13; the Telegraph and Texas Register, however, did not print the notice until February 5, 1840. The inside-page masthead listed Bonnell as editor and announced that the paper would be issued twice weekly, on Wednesday and Saturday. The first issue contained a report on a session of the Fourth Congress, a sketch of Austin, a 2-column editorial lambasting a bill to sell land to Cherokee Indians, a description of "Little River and Its Tributaries," a 3-stanza poem titled "The Soldier's Wish," and only one column of advertisements. In an editorial on page 2, "TO OUR PATRONS," Bonnell reveals that the firm's new printing press, mentioned before Congress in December, apparently still had not arrived:

> This paper is devoted to no party -- no man -- nor no set of men; but will at all times speak the opinion of its Editor, unawed, and untrammeled by party measures. We think this country too young to become the prey of party politics. . . .
>
> We had intended to publish a weekly paper on an extra-imperial sheet, but on further reflection, came to the conclusion that it would be more interesting to our readers, to publish a smaller paper, and issue it semi-weekly. . . .
>
> In extenuation of the shabby appearance of our paper, we would remark, that we are in the interior of Texas, near 200 miles from the coast, and in a city that is but six years old, and types and printing presses are not as easily obtained. . . . But we have sent on for an entire new establishment, and hope shortly to be able to put our paper in a more respectable dress.

Thus was the public introduced to the writing of George Bonnell, editor of the Sentinel.

The paper boasted two columns of ads in its second number, issued Saturday, January 18, and coverage of the debate on the Cherokee Land Bill was jumped from page 1 to page 4 and back to page 2. A small notice on

page 3 announced a meeting of the Texas Typographical Association at 7 p. m. that evening. That Bonnell intended to stand firm on his paper's insistence that subscriptions be received only from persons sending $5 in advance is shown by his comment in the issue of January 22 that a long list of subscribers would not be sent the Sentinel because they had neglected to include payment. Bonnell's hatred of the Indians was reflected in his editorial that appeared on page 3 of that same issue:

> We publish in this paper, Gen. Houston's speech on the Cherokee Land Bill to the exclusion of almost everything else. To the principles here laid down we can never subscribe -- we do not believe that the Indians ever did, or ever can become the proprietors of the soil in this republic.

Page 1 on Saturday, January 25, was devoted to publication of a treaty of "Amity, Navigation and Commerce" between France and the Republic of Texas. Inside pages sported more criticism of the Land Bill and a warning from Bonnell to Texans to guard against fraudulent land claims. An advertisement stated that "a few Classical school books" were on sale at the Sentinel office, and an editorial on page 3, criticizing the sale of worthless Texas land script to United States citizens in Mexico, reported also that many such citizens, realizing they had been defrauded, were in turn selling the script to unsuspecting persons in the States. In another comment on page 3, Bonnell reiterated the stand his paper had taken in its prospectus and in the first issue:

> We were asked a day or two ago if ours was [sic] an administration or anti-administration paper -- we answer, neither: we belong to no man nor set of men. The paper always speaks the language of its editor. . . .

With an ear out for cultural affairs, the Sentinel of January 25 printed the constitution and list of members of the newly-formed Texas Patriotic and Philanthropic Society and on January 29 published a notice of a meeting that evening of the Texas Philosophical Society. By then, the Sentinel was carrying more than 3 columns of ads. Candidates running for office in the county were informed February 1 that their names would be printed by the Sentinel for a fee of $10. Publication of the acts of the Fourth Congress was frequent whenever space permitted. The issue of February 5 carried as well 2 columns of news from Europe, which had been clipped from the New York Evening Star of January 10 and the New York Mercury of January 9.

Throughout his career as editor of the Sentinel, Bonnell maintained a sharp distaste for printing poems. His attempts to disassociate himself and his paper from poets who saw the pages of the Sentinel as the mouthpiece

for their verse often border on pure comedy. On February 5, a lone poem appeared on page 3, with the editor's salty remarks:

> We have been requested to publish the following lines: we are no judge of poetry -- and consequently cannot decide upon their merits. We are however opposed to the whole race of newspaper poetizers [sic], and hope we may never be inflicted in that way. . . . We have for once yielded to the solicitations of our correspondent -- not, however, entirely satisfied that the space they occupy had not better have been appropriated to a chapter of accidents.

Two issues later, on February 12, Bonnell again blazed away at a poet who had mailed a poem, "To Julia," which appeared on page 3. In that instance, Bonnell's denunciation is especially interesting for the light it sheds on his convictions regarding the duties of his office:

> We were in hopes that our remarks a few days ago would be a sufficient hint to all newspaper poetizers who were disposed to inflict on the public the jingling products of their aching brain, but we have been disappointed. The following lines were handed us. . . . Upon reading them, we deemed it nothing more than a quiz tendered us by one of our friends, and proceeded to treat it accordingly by giving it a place among our waste paper. . . .
>
> We have always been of opinion that when a communication is given to an editor for publication, it is then at his will to publish or not, just as he may deem proper; and that it is not only his right, but his duty to condemn, if necessary, as well as to applaud. We have always been rather disposed, however, when we thought a piece unsuited for publication, to give the author a modest refusal by laying it aside, and giving it no further notice, but it seems that this is not enough for our modest correspondents. . . . They cannot be satisfied to hand in their productions, and resign them to their fate, but must harass you at every corner of the street, to know if their "piece is to be published in the next paper."

Bonnell lost his fight, however, and apparently decided he must yield to pressure. Poems often adorned the pages of subsequent issues, and were not accompanied by a single word -- good or bad -- from the editor. It probably became easier to publish than to be harassed.

On Saturday, February 8, the paper announced adjournment of Congress on the previous Wednesday. The issue of February 12 contained an offer from Bonnell of a year's subscription to any person who could furnish two copies of the first and fourth issues and one copy of the third to the Sentinel office. No reason for the request was given. Apparently short of news for that issue, Bonnell was moved to comment on the mild weather and expressed his joy to learn that local farmers ". . . are making extensive preparations for crops."

On Wednesday, February 19, Bonnell listed himself as agent for Joseph Addison Clark, an employe of the Sentinel who was making preparations for a business trip to the United States and who would be glad to attend to other persons' affairs while there. Announcement of a meeting of the Austin Lyceum that evening was published, and a notice appeared on page 3 stating that the Sentinel would appear weekly ". . . until the mail contracts are taken, which will not be before the 15th proximo." Despite obvious plans at that time to return to semi-weekly publication, (the notation, "Published Every Wednesday and Saturday," was retained in the masthead through two subsequent issues), the paper was printed as a weekly from that date until it folded late in 1841. Bonnell never officially announced a decision to junk the semi-weekly in favor of the weekly. In the issue of March 11, however, the frequency-of-publication notice had been dropped from the masthead, and on May 16 the editor noted only that "We last week changed our day of publication -- and in future the Sentinel will be published on Saturday." Almost as an omen of Bonnell's participation in the Santa Fe Expedition more than a year later, that same February 19 issue carried a full-column essay advocating and listing advantages of trade with the New Mexican settlement. The Franco-Texan treaty was reprinted on page 1 on February 26.

Bonnell's personal estrangement from Sam Houston first became evident in the issue of Wednesday, March 4. On page 1 appeared the first in a promised series of letters -- actually political treatises attacking Houston from every conceivable angle -- written for the Sentinel by one whose name appeared only as Publius. Through 11 issues of the paper, ending finally on May 16, a like number of letters from Publius appeared -- without exception, on page 1. In the first essay, Publius asserted that his writings were intended to correct error, expose vice, and vindicate the truth. Bonnell himself commented that the letters were ". . . designed to throw some light upon the conduct of Mr. Houston, the honorable member of Congress. . . ." On April 29, Bonnell noted, in a defense of the letters, that "'Publius' is charged with vulgarity for using the term Big Drunk in speaking of Sam Houston, but it seems to me that proper names are always properly used to designate the persons to whom they belong." Bonnell did not mince his words in reporting in that issue a misfortune which had taken place at a recent celebration of Texas' independence:

> A very melancholy accident occurred on the 2nd instant in this city. In firing the national salute, the cannon went off while the

load was being rammed down, and Col. Thomas W. Ward, who was loading it, had his right arm entirely severed, and his side severely injured.

The Texas Sentinel had a new face on Wednesday, March 11. The small, quarter-inch-high nameplate had been replaced by one twice as high, and in order to allow two complementary letters in the Publius article to be printed side by side, all or a portion of the three columns on page 1 were vertically divided, rendering in effect the appearance of a 6-column front page. The effect was spotty, however, since only the bottom half of column 1 and the top fourth of column 3 were so separated. The only extra edition of the paper while Bonnell was editor came with a 7½x13-inch broadside on Monday, March 23, carrying a report of the Council House Indian fight at San Antonio. Although published under the nameplate, "Sentinel--Extra," it is probable that the extra was ordered and paid for by the government. The report, by Gen. Hugh McLeod, was reprinted in the regular Sentinel edition of March 25. An advertisement which first appeared in the paper on March 11 suggests the extent of Bonnell's land holdings in the Austin area:

> TO WOOD CUTTERS -- All persons are hereby forwarned [sic] from cutting timber upon my land, situated four miles and a half above the city of Austin, upon the west side of the Colorado river, and extending up that stream to within one mile of the mouth of the Pierdenalis [sic] river; and back to Williamson's creek -- containing 54,684 acres.
>
> Also from cutting timber upon forty acres in the Austin city tract, being lot no. 10, in range B. situated one mile east of the city of Austin.
>
> The law will be rigidly enforced against all intruders. . . .
>
> G. W. Bonnell

The Sentinel underwent another facial for the April Fool's Day issue. The paper's motto, "Veritas Vincit," in the center of the upper folio line, was reset in smaller type, in upper- and lower-case italics, and the other information in that line was reset in large-capital letters. In the lower folio line, "City of Austin" was shortened to "Austin." That issue carried the first notice that Bonnell's book had been published and was available at the Sentinel office. Advertisements were crowded onto the front page for the first time on Wednesday, April 8, with a full column placed in column 1.

Editorial feuds were greatly in vogue during the days of the Republic, and George Bonnell apparently relished any chance to exchange swipes of the pen with his fellow-journalists. The thread of editorial fighting that

runs through many of the issues of the Sentinel is witness to a different side of both the paper and also Bonnell and can best be told separately. Bonnell exchanged blows with three sets of principals: Augustus M. Tomkins of the Houston Times, D. H. Fitch of the Houston Morning Star, and George K. Teulon of the rival Austin City Gazette. While the Sentinel's skirmish with Tomkins undoubtedly was serious, the in-fighting that occurred between Bonnell and Teulon appears to have been intended more as entertainment for Austinites than as public testimony of a deep-rooted hatred. Bonnell's remarks against Fitch remained mild compared with his flagrant attacks against Tomkins. On March 25, Bonnell fired a first shot:

> We have seen two or three numbers of a paper . . . at Houston, called the Daily Times, and edited by augustus m. tomkins [sic]. It is just such a thing as we might expect from such a source.

Bonnell delighted in clipping brief articles from the Times to which he could add a few words of his own and arrive at what he must have thought were marks in his favor:

> "The communication of 'Corn Cob' is all cob; there is not a grain of sense in it."--Times.
> This remark would be applicable to the whole paper.
>
> "The London Times . . . sold upwards of thirty thousand copies. We wish we could sell one-tenth that number of the Daily Times."--Daily Times.
> You could, to the trunk makers. Your printing would not hurt the paper much for their use.[23]
>
> . . .
>
> "The editorial department will be conducted by A. M. Tomkins, Esq., long a resident of this city."--Daily Times.
> The only thing he has to recommend him.[24]

Bonnell's feud with Tomkins was an old one. The two men first had met in 1836, when Tomkins joined up with the company of volunteers Bonnell was leading to Texas from Columbus, Miss. A dislike for Tomkins grew out of incidents on that journey, and no doubt Bonnell was astonished to learn of the man's appointment as editor of the Times in early March. The most bitter argument revolved around circumstances in which Bonnell had left Houston the previous year. In March, Tomkins accused Bonnell in the Times of having left for Austin without paying taxes to Houston, to which Bonnell retorted in the Sentinel March 25 that he was not aware of any taxes he owed since he never owned any property there and had not heard of any poll tax levy before he moved. He then proceeded to list an account of debts he claimed Tomkins owed him:

> But if the editor of the Sentinel does owe anything there, he requests the editor of the Times to settle it and deduct it from the account the editor of the Sentinel holds against him, which is herewith submitted.
>
> . . .
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | To money advanced to pay his expenses from Jackson, Mississippi, to Nacogdoches, Texas, in 1836, | $65.00 |
> | To 30 dollars loaned at Natchez to pay a grog bill, | 30.00 |
> | To 25 doll's loaned at Nacogdoches, 1836, | 25.00 |
> | To 100 dollars of my money collected at Nacogdoches and never accounted for, | 100.00 |
> | To 40 dollars loaned at Columbia in 1836, | 40.00 |
> | Interest for three years at ten per cent., | 78.00 |
> | Total, | $338.00 |
>
> The above account is for par funds, but we would be glad to get it in Brandon Owl Creek, or in fact any thing would be better than an account against Augustus M. Tomkins.

When Tomkins denied the account in the pages of the Times, Bonnell retaliated in the Sentinel on April 15:

> . . . we did not expect him to acknowledge it, for a man who is base enough to borrow money and not return it, will generally deny the debt. There are however about a hundred people in Houston who have heard him acknowledge to a considerable part of it.
>
> . . .
>
> Next time you accuse a man, Tomkins, of leaving a place without paying his dues, try and select one whom you are not quite so far in arrears with yourself. "Those who live in glass houses," &c.

The next issue of the Houston paper to which Bonnell alludes has not been located; one can, however, imagine the ingredients that forced the comment in the Sentinel April 22:

> A. M. Tomkins . . . publishes an abusive and slanderous article against the editor of the Sentinel. . . . he is as destitute of truth, as he is of the common decencies of life. We, therefore, cannot notice him, any further than to tell him he lies.

It now was Tomkins' turn. Publishing the above-quoted paragraph in his Times on April 30, under a headline reading "AWFUL! SHOCKING!," Tomkins blasted away with seven charges encompassing Bonnell's status in Houston, his conduct as leader of the Indian campaign in the winter of 1838-39, and an affair in Mississippi.

> . . . he is too grand a coward. Here, however, is what we charge

him with.

1st. He acted like a base coward on the Brazos campaign.

2d. He left this city (which he abuses so much) without paying his taxes.

3d. In a fight with a gentleman, he ignominiously bit off his nose.

4th. During the Brazos campaign his horse kicked another overboard from a ferry flat and he placed it to the account of the poor ferryman.

5th. He gave away public horses to some ladies there.

6th. He marched Capt. Briscoe's company 20 miles out of the way to show himself, pretty as he is, to some women.

7th. Though last not least, he has proved himself a base and recreant traitor to his friends.

We could make many more such specifications but the craven hearted creature deserves too much contempt to occupy further space in our columns. . . .

Tomkins did allot more space, however, for in the next column appeared an unsigned letter, entitled "For the Daily Times. NO. 1.," which was highly critical of Bonnell's editorial tirades against the city of Houston and of his abrupt switch from the fold of Houston to the Lamar faction. The article began and ended:

The Austin Sentinel of the 15th inst., edited by Geo. W. Bonnell, contains a long and shameless tirade against the city of Houston. . . . Mr. Lehman, who never saw Mr. Bonnell, would delineate upon canvass [sic] an exact likeness of that gentleman, simply from the guide which would be furnished him in the gall and wormwood, the envy and maliciousness, the calumny and detraction, which run through this entire article of that crabbid [sic] and jaundiced writer.

. . .

. . . this disappointed, persecuted gentleman is now at Austin, billing and cooing with Lamar, the evil genius of his fortunes; is pulling in his traces as tractably as a well-broken harness nag; and, at the bidding of his master, writes columns upon columns of the vilest scandal against all the objects of his master's wrath and indignation, such as Gen. Houston, the city of Houston and other men and other places.

Bonnell, on the other hand, despite his vow April 22 not to notice Tomkins further, called Tomkins a boon companion of gamblers and loafers on May 9 and proceeded, in 1½ columns, to deny the Times editor's seven charges. In answer to the first accusation, Bonnell stated that no person had found fault with him as leader of the Brazos campaign until after he had left and then only because he was not there, that his conduct had met "with the approbation of the president and secretary of war." To Tomkins' second charge, Bonnell repeated his disclaim

of any taxes owed Houston, saying, "This, like the rest of Gust [sic] Tomkins's [sic] charges is false." The Sentinel editor explained the allegation that he had bit off a man's nose by saying only that he supposed Tomkins alluded to "a difficulty which we had in Mississippi some six or seven years ago, which, according to the practice of the state, was settled in a very summary manner." He stated further that he had left Mississippi "receiving every demonstration of honor and respect which the citizens . . . could bestow." Concerning the incident of the drowned horses, Bonnell blamed the matter on carelessness of the ferry operator, explaining even that the regimental pay master had refused to pay the ferry toll because of the accident. Bonnell conceded that he had given away several horses while on the campaign, but explained that the animal given to a widow with a sick child ". . . could not get up nor down without help, . . . he was lousy, and would infect every horse in the camp." Several other steeds in like condition were given to "some settlers." Those persons who received horses, Bonnell stated, had had their own animals stolen by Indians. The Major repudiated the sixth charge by saying the company had been forced to detour because the Navasota River was impassible, because horses had to be taken to Washington to be shod, and because the men hoped to catch up with a band of Indians farther up the Brazos. To the charge of being a traitor to his friends, Bonnell answered, "Here we are at a loss to know his meaning, unless it is in not suffering him longer to loaf upon us." In the Sentinel on April 15, Bonnell had criticized an article in the Times concerning commercial advantages of Houston because, accordingly to Bonnell, the story introduced "politics into a statistical article" and encouraged sectional jealousies. When Bonnell said that the article was nevertheless a well-written piece -- too good, in fact, to have been written by the Times editor, Tomkins flayed back on April 30, remarking, ". . . we will say this much any how, Bonnel [sic] writes his own editorial for we know of no one else whom the effusions of his paper are worthy of." The feud between the two papers did not last long, however, since the Morning Star reported on July 21 that Gus Tomkins had quit the Times.

Bonnell's concern with D. H. Fitch, editor of the Morning Star at Houston, is a curious matter, since Cruger, publisher of the Sentinel, owned also the former paper. This fact probably explains the mellowness of Bonnell's references:

> We have seen but little in the STAR lately which is not

> incorrect, except the articles thay have cabbaged from the Sentinel.
>
> Try again, Mr. STAR -- you had better go on the principle of the old proverb to think twice before you speak once. But you speak four or five times, and do not think at all.[26]

One exchange between Bonnell and Fitch in October is particularly interesting because of the suggestion that by that time Bonnell may have been tiring of his editorial duties. Printing first a quotation from the Morning Star of October 10, which implies that the Sentinel had had difficulty obtaining paper and may have had to publish several issues on something other than white newsprint, Bonnell wrote his answer on October 17:

> "The Austin Sentinel -- we must add the word Austin to its cognomen, or but few could locate it -- has resumed its piebald complection [sic]; it comes out again on a sort of amalgamation paper -- hard pushed, heh -- major? How is your eye? Is there a certain sympathy between that and your sheet, which has caused the black-and-blue appearance of the latter?"
>
> We acknowledge the corn; we are hard pushed, and who is not in these hard times? But, thank providence, we have been enabled to practise honesty, and yet find some kind of paper to publish the Sentinel on. Our subscribers have never had occasion to complain of the non appearance of our paper, for weeks together.

Diatribes that flew within the limits of Austin between Bonnell and George Teulon, editor of the City Gazette, probably did more to boost local circulation than to doctor hurt pride. Published by Samuel Whiting, the Gazette had been the first paper in the new capital. Only two serious disputes arose between the rival papers: over the dismissal of Asa Brigham as secretary of the treasury for the Republic in April, and over the Gazette rumors in October that the Sentinel was about to fold. Bonnell, however, took every opportunity to introduce his readers to the Sentinel appraisal of Teulon:

> George K. Teulon, the nominal editor of the Austin City Gazette is one of . . . Whiting's last year's importation -- not from the United States, where he must have been born with generous sentiments, and where he would have imbibed some sympathy of feeling for Texas, but direct from Upper Canada -- and truly, he is a crude specimen of that frigid clime.[27]
>
> . . .
>
> There is a thing editing the . . . Gazette by the name of Teulon. . . . this name is quite appropriate, for nobody can edit a paper for Sam Whiting without being made a tool-on.[28]

Bonnell stated on March 4 that Teulon had claimed the Sentinel remarks about him had missed their mark entirely. Bonnell retorted, "It would not have been astonishing if we had. We are a pretty good shot, but might miss a very small mark. But judging of his fluttering, we should think he was at least winged." Bonnell must have relished also an opportunity to publish in the Sentinel April 8 a letter from 16 Bastrop residents announcing they were ending their subscriptions to the Gazette. Battle lines over the Brigham affair were drawn in April, when Lamar fired the former on suspicion of having embezzled $37,000 from the Republic treasury. It is apparent that Bonnell also suspected Brigham's guilt, but the Sentinel actually entered the foray primarily to come to the defense of Lamar, whom the City Gazette was criticizing for having dismissed the secretary. Bonnell's stand on Brigham was moderate, and his editorial on April 29, written in Lamar's behalf, was typical of the editor's position throughout:

> To major Brigham we have no unkind feeling; and if after the investigation shall have been made, he stands acquitted of all blame, no one will be more ready to do him justice, than the editor of the Sentinel.

The controversy only simmered during the summer, while Brigham was being investigated, but almost all of the Sentinel news hole on September 5, as Bonnell acknowledged on page 3, was devoted to letters of officials regarding Brigham and minutes of the investigative committees. Teulon, on the other hand, clearly distrusted Bonnell's position:

> Maj. Bonnell some time since spoke of his respect for Maj. Brigham in such a manner as must have led many to believe that his respect was almost fraternal; if he ever really entertained any respect for . . . Brigham . . . he has most assuredly taken a strange method of manifesting his "brotherly love" by lending his assistance in calumnating their characters. . . .[29]

Word spread by the Gazette staff in October that the Sentinel was nearing its final issue must have been extremely exasperating for Bonnell, who on October 24 fired a volley of charges:

> Major Sam Whiting and his subservient tool, G. K. Teulon, have for some time been industriously circulating the report that the Texas Sentinel was shortly to be discontinued. . . .
>
> The last number of the Gazette states that the Sentinel would long since have been discontinued, but for the fostering care of some of the officers of government, in supplying it with cartridge paper. This assertion is false, and Mr. Teulon knew it to be so. . . .

> This is not the first time similar accusations have been brought against us. We are called the government organ, and accused of being supported by government patronage. Those who make the charge, know very well that it is altogether untrue. Nearly all the government patronage has been given to the Gazette. . . .
>
> We have had but little of the government work; and what support we have given to the administration, has been from a thorough conviction that it was right.

All was not so dastardly, however, between Bonnell and Teulon. It was on the latter's motion that Bonnell was accepted into the Austin Lyceum in July, 1840, and at one time the pair served together on a debating team at a Lyceum meeting.[30] One contemporary was moved to comment that she believed Teulon was the better writer, ". . . clearer and more incisive," because Teulon had ". . . the advantage of being considered eccentric. . . ."[31] At least on one occasion, Bonnell had a few words of praise for Teulon in the Sentinel. In the issue of June 27, Bonnell reported he concurred with Teulon's suggestion that a convention of editors and newspaper owners be held. "It is time there should be a better understanding between the Editors of newspapers in the Republic than at present exists," Bonnell concluded.

Bonnell's sense of humor often is reflected in fillers and short news items that he inserted in pages of his Sentinel. He commented on January 22 about a society which had been formed by young ladies in Boston for the purpose of reforming young gentlemen:

> If the dear creatures will emigrate to Texas, there will be no need of forming such societies -- all the reformation necessary can be produced by a kind of domestic arrangement which they will find the bachelors of this republic very anxious to enter into.

It is not apparent to whom Bonnell's advice, "How To Write An Editorial," which was printed on February 19, was intended -- but no doubt his message caused some concern:

> If you see any article in a newspaper which pleases you, after reading it over two or three times, you can write off an article for your own paper which will sufficiently express the idea, without using the precise language of the other paper. If it does not express the idea so clearly and fully as the article from which you copied, it will have the advantage of being original, which is a considerable item for editors who have no resources of their own.

A joke adorned page 3 on October 24: "Mama, who is that aunt-Arctic who we hear so much about down south? I don't know dear; some old maid I suppose; none of our relations, sure!" No such filler must have been available two issues before

when the following device was placed at the bottom of column 3 on the front page: "Man wants but little here below, nor wants that little long, as the printer said when he wanted three lines -- as we do now -- to fill out his column." Having been elected public printer by Congress, Bonnell perhaps was reluctant to jest at members of that body. On January 22, however, Bonnell published an answer to one representative who had shown disgust at the chance of being mentioned in the Sentinel: "The gentleman from Matagorda miscalculates his importance -- we shall never trouble the Jackall [sic], while there are Lions in the forest: we are not marksman enough to hit him -- the game is too small."

Advertisements were printed on the front page in the issue of April 8, and on April 15 Bonnell was forced to promise that ads left out of that number would be published in the next. The exposure of a hoax was the subject of an article that ran April 22 under the headline, "The Crockett Humbug"; in that story, Bonnell asserted that rumors published by the City Gazette claiming that Davy Crockett had not been killed at the Alamo but was alive and working "in the mines of Mexico" were untrue. Only one instance found in which Bonnell refused to print a news item appeared in that same number; the editor stated he had received a communication from a man living near La Grange that exposed "some of the vices" of a prominent aspirant to the presidency of the Republic, ". . . but we cannot give it a place in the Sentinel." By the issue of April 29, almost 5 columns were devoted to advertising, almost half the paper. No Sentinel appeared on Austin streets the next Wednesday, but the second number to appear on Saturday, on May 16, officially announced the change in publication day. A notice on page 2 informed readers that Bonnell had temporarily relinquished his duties:

> The absence of our editor, major Bonnell, must be an apology for the sparsness [sic] of editorial matter. The inconvenience is expected to be of short duration. The major, with his usual alacrity, has gone with his young compatriots of the Travis Guards, to San Antonio, at the call of the president.

Unable to return to Austin for the May 23 issue, Bonnell acted instead as stringer and mailed a letter to the editor pro tem about the activities of the group. Commenting that the regular editor was doing "camp duty," the substitute editor, whose identity remains unknown, printed an extract from Bonnell's communication:

> San Antonio, May 17, 1840
>
> On our arrival at this place, we found the difficulty

> with the soldiers pretty much quieted. The Comanches are becoming quite troublesome, and we shall be ordered out to scour the country about the headwaters of the Pierdernalis [sic], where it is believed the Indians are concentrating. From that place, the Travis Guards will return to Austin. We shall probably be absent as much as four weeks.

Bonnell was back in time to edit the next issue, however, explaining on May 30 that the commander, deciding it would be wiser to raise a larger force before pursuing Indians, had ordered the Guards home the previous Sunday. A large campaign had been planned to depart Austin June 20, Bonnell advised; he then noted that he approved of the manner in which the "pro tem Editor" had handled the Sentinel. In a political notice on page 3, Bonnell was listed as one of six candidates seeking the office of "colonel of the regiment composed of Travis and Bastrop counties." No indication has been found to suggest that the Major was victorious in that election. The next Monday, a band of 40 Cherokees raided a ranch 12 miles north of Austin, killing one man and stealing a number of horses. That same day, the Travis Guards struck out in pursuit, accompanied by the militia of 14 counties. On Saturday, June 13, an article in the Sentinel once more lamented, "Our editor . . . is again absent; he has gone on a tour with the Travis Guards, in search of the Indian depredators." The same issue carried a creditor's advertisement upside down on page 3; the Sentinel explained:

> Our readers may perhaps have to stand on their heads, while reading an advertisement which is inserted in another column; but it is not our fault. We have followed the written instructions of the advertiser, to "publish three times, wrong side up." . . . Perhaps he thinks it may the more readily attract the attention of . . . his debtors, by finding them in a like situation!

Bonnell returned in time to edit the issue of June 20 and listed himself as an Austin agent for "Everrette & Co., General Auctioneers, Land Agents, Commission and Forwarding Merchants, at Galveston." That financial difficulties of the Republic were affecting the Sentinel was shown by an announcement from Cruger and Bonnell that their office no longer would receive Texas promissory notes at par for payment of debts, but would instead accept the notes at the rate of three for one, or at their highest market value. Plans were told also for doing a series of stories under the heading "Internal Improvements" in the Republic. The issue of Saturday, June 28, was misdated June 27 on page 1, but was correct in the masthead. The entire front page had been given over to a letter from Lamar in which the president discussed domestic and foreign aspects of his administration. Branch T. Archer was author of an article on the

financial structure of the Republic that covered the front page on July 4.

In the issue of July 25,[32] Bonnell printed "A Brief Vocabulary of the Comanche Language," most likely his own handiwork, which consisted of 91 Comanche words accompanied by their English equivalents. The Indian words appear to have been spelled phonetically; also included were the Comanche words for numerals from 1 to 20. That number of the Sentinel was Cruger's last issue: the paper for Saturday, August 1, carried a notice, dated July 28, announcing that the partnership between Bonnell and Cruger had been dissolved by mutual consent. Persons having claims against the firm of Cruger & Bonnell were directed to present the same to Bonnell; those indebted to the firm likewise were requested to call at the Sentinel office to make immediate payment. A post script to the announcement informed readers, "The paper will continue to be published by Geo. W. Bonnell. No change politically or otherwise, will take place in the Sentinel." The folio line apparently was overlooked that issue, since Cruger's name still appeared. From August 1, however, Bonnell became editor and publisher and continued to handle the duties of both positions through 19 consecutive weekly issues.

The Sentinel for August 15 boasted new folio lines in accord with Bonnell's ownership.[33] The same size nameplate was retained, but the upper folio line now contained the subscription rate, $5 per year, with the notation, "Texas Money Three For One," and Bonnell's advertising rates, which had not appeared before. A square, or eight lines, of advertising would cost $3 for first insertion and $2 for every consecutive insertion. The lower folio line contained the place and date of publication, the volume and issue numbers, and the notation, "By G. W. Bonnell, Public Printer." The paper's motto was dropped from the folio line for lack of space, but reappeared in the masthead on page 2 on August 22.

Issues of the Sentinel under Bonnell show a striking dissimilarity to the papers for which he had the assistance of Cruger. The change came not in appearance nor political stance, but in content. More and more, Bonnell was forced to rely upon reprinting clippings from other papers and publishing random letters in an attempt to fill the news hole. The transition was subtle but apparent as the amount of local news and editorial matter gradually diminished. It perhaps was a remarkable feat that Bonnell, burdened by the duties of editor and publisher, managed even to print a paper each week -- news or no news, he did not miss a single issue.

Bonnell expressed appreciation to Edward Burleson on August 22 for a gift of a Comanche war bonnet the general had acquired in a recent engagement on Plumb Creek. Bonnell imagined it must have been worn by one of the principle chiefs, as it ". . . is the choicest specimen of savage finery we have ever seen." Cruger's departure from the paper evidently had no immediate adverse effect on finances since 2 columns of ads had to be placed on the front page on September 5, the first time such had happened since April 29; in all, 6½ columns, or more than half the paper, were devoted to advertising. On September 12, front-page ads gave way to a fictional piece entitled, "The Woodsman and His Wolf; or, The Spectre of the Mountain," with a subtitle, "A tale involving the fate of a young and very interesting female." By the issue of September 19, advertising had dropped sharply, from almost 7 columns to only 4. No record can be found of the amount Cruger and Bonnell together charged advertisers, but it is possible the sum had been considerably less than the rates Bonnell installed when he took over; such might account for the decline. Bonnell's rate even may have been considered exorbitant; one of the first things Cruger and Wing did when the pair took over the paper from Bonnell was to reduce the cost for first insertion by $1.75, and cut the price for each consecutive insertion by $1.25.[34]

An account of the capture of San Antonio in 1836 appeared on Saturday, September 26, along with an editorial, "Our Relations With Mexico." Bonnell told also of a visit he had made to the armory in Austin:

> This department is under the superintendence of George W. Hockley. . . . He has had a four pound brass cannon, which has been rendered useless, bored out, and it is now a beautiful piece of ordnance of the denomination of a five pounder.

Bonnell offered no explanation why he had "Public Printer" removed from beside his name in the lower folio line; he may have begun to consider the title superfluous, since he complained of getting so little government work. The action may have resulted, too, from a wish not to do any more job printing for the Republic or for private citizens. At any rate, no publications bearing the Sentinel imprint have been located for the period from Cruger's departure in August to early November. Running short of paper by October 3, Bonnell was forced to trim the width of the columns on pages 3 and 4; the first column was cut from 3¼ to 2½ inches wide and columns 2 and 3 were reduced by ¼ inch. The same economy was practiced in the issues of October 10, 17, 24, and 31; Bonnell's fear of running out of paper must have been premature, since the Novem-

ber papers contained columns of regular measure. Finally, on November 28, Bonnell stated he had received a new stock of newsprint and was expecting an even larger supply in several days.

Obviously anticipating the convention of the Fifth Congress one month later, Bonnell wrote an editorial for the October 3 edition expressing his hope that members would be liberal in appropriating funds for the Texas Navy. On October 10, Bonnell printed on page 4 William Wordsworth's poem, "Perfect Woman," but for some reason omitted the title as well as the poet's name. A list of representatives to the Fifth Congress appeared in the paper on October 17, and in the next issue Bonnell published two extracts from Frederic Leclerc's book, Texas and Its Revolution, which was written in Paris, France. Bonnell neglected to mention who had translated the passages, remarking only that "The whole history deserves to be translated, but at present we are able to give only the . . . following. . . ." With Congress in session by the issue of November 7, Bonnell began printing proceedings of that body and devoted 5 columns to Lamar's message, which had been delivered November 4. In view of this, Bonnell explained:

> We have anticipated our publication day, in order to lay the President's Message before our readers. . . . We have no space for comments this week.

The last four numbers of Volume I, from November 21 through December 12, present a curious problem. In each of these papers, Bonnell's name remains in the lower folio line, but his name as editor, which had appeared in the masthead since the first issue, is missing. It is not known for sure when Cruger and Wing returned to Austin or when the pair actually purchased the Sentinel from Bonnell. Unfortunately, Volume II, number 1, under the new owners, has not been located. The second number of the new volume, issued December 26, contains only a remark by Cruger that ". . . the Sentinel has lately changed hands." In that issue, Cruger is listed as editor, and a case might be made for Cruger's having returned to the capital in November in time to edit the last four issues of volume I, with Bonnell remaining as publisher. Bonnell may have consented, for reasons unknown, to give over the editorial duties to Cruger, in an agreement that Bonnell's name would remain in the folio line through a complete volume. No clue could be found, however, to suggest who edited numbers 49 through 52. The Telegraph and Texas Register of December 9 printed a letter from Austin, dated December 2, concerning affairs of Congress in which it was reported that Bonnell recently had covered a speech by a Mr. Potter in the House. Without doubt,

though, the Sentinel issue of December 12 was Bonnell's last in any capacity.[35] The paper was continued weekly as the Texas Sentinel until March, 1841, when the name was changed to Texas Centinel. On November 11, 1841, the Centinel announced that Cruger had sold the paper to Greenberry Horras Harrison, who published the Daily Texian and Weekly Texian in its place.

Public Printers

In addition to publishing the Texas Sentinel, Bonnell and Cruger had attempted to realize profits by doing job printing -- for the government and for private organizations. On December 18, 1839, having been elected public printers for the Fourth Congress, Bonnell and Cruger were awarded a contract to print a translation of the Texas Laws in Spanish, ". . . in small pica type properly accented and executed in a style equal to the Spanish laws of Coahuila and Texas . . . @ One hundred & thirteen dollars for Two Thousand copies of each and every form of eight pages."[36] This contract, however, was not fulfilled until 1841, and bore the imprint not of Cruger and Bonnell but of the Telegraph press in Houston.[37] The journals of the Fourth Congress, which should have been printed by Cruger and Bonnell, after that body adjourned on February 5, 1840, were not printed that year, ". . . the reason alleged being that no appropriation for printing them had been made."[38] Laws of the Fourth Congress were printed by Cruger on his Telegraph press after his partnership with Bonnell was dissolved in late July, 1840.[39] Thomas W. Streeter has noted in his Bibliography of Texas that more than half his entries for 1840 were for government publications, and that most of these were done at the office of the Austin City Gazette by Samuel Whiting, who had been given the contract for job printing.[40] Publications done by Bonnell and Cruger before their partnership was terminated bear the imprint of either a form of "Cruger & Bonnell's Print" or a form of "Sentinel Print" or "Sentinel Office." The former imprint was applied to a 16-page publication, Constitution and By-Laws of the Travis Guards: Adopted March First, 1840.[41] Likewise, the 150-page book, Topographical Description of Texas, written by Bonnell, was printed at the Sentinel office in April, 1840, and bore the imprint of "Cruger & Bonnell, public printers." At least three other documents bore the same imprint, but no copies of any of these have been located; they are known only by the printers' bills against the Republic of Texas, which have been found. The first was a $15-bill, dated May 20, 1840, for printing done for the Adjutant and Inspector General. A second bill, dated June 5, 1840, reveals that the pair printed 50 artillery notices

for $20 for the War Department; 50 handbills calling for volunteers also were printed for the War Department at a cost of $15.

At least six publications, bearing a form of the imprint of the Sentinel Office, done while Bonnell and Cruger were together, have survived. A 13-page By-Laws of Austin Lodge No. XII, done for the Austin chapter of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, apparently was printed in February, 1840, since the publication noted that the by-laws had been ratified on February 2.[43] On March 23, 1840, the Sentinel office produced the 19-page First Annual Catalogue of Rutersville College, Rutersville, Fayette County, Texas, 1840, which probably was the first printed catalog of a Texas college or of any Texas educational institution.[44] On that same day, the pair printed as a 2-column broadside measuring 7½x13 inches a report, dated March 20, 1840, on the Council House Fight, made to Mirabeau B. Lamar by Adjutant and Inspector General Hugh McLeod. That Sentinel-produced document was the first contemporary account of the battle at San Antonio in which seven Texans died and 35 Comanches were killed.[45] In late February or early March, Bonnell and Cruger delivered from the Sentinel office a 39-page document with the exhaustive title, An Act Altering the Several Acts to Raise a Public Revenue by Impost Duties. Also, An Act to Provide and Establish the Warehousing System in the Ports of This Republic. To Which is Added the President's Proclamation. Both acts had been approved by Lamar on February 5, and the proclamation was dated February 11.[46] Although no copies of the document have been located, the Sentinel office's bill for printing 150 copies of An Act to Provide for the Return of Surveys, for the Collection of Government Dues on Lands, and for Other Purposes in pamphlet form was approved for payment February 17, 1840.[47] The Sentinel office's last document before Cruger left for Houston apparently was a broadside, 150 copies of which were ready by June 6, 1840. The sheet was a proclamation signed by Branch T. Archer, secretary of war, and was dated at the War Department, Austin, on the same day. In issuing a call to arms, Archer reported that he believed Mexican and Indian forces were converging to attack San Patricio and the upper-Brazos regions. The broadside contained also General Order No. 24, calling out the first and part of the second brigades, which applied to 14 of the counties west and south of the Trinity River.[48]

As has been indicated, no publications bearing the Sentinel imprint have been located to suggest that Bonnell did any job printing between August

and November, 1840, with one possible exception. Two hundred copies of a 24-page document entitled Report of the Secretary of State. November Twenty-Fifth, 1840, printed by Bonnell, actually bear the date October 20 on page 3. The document contained a report by Joseph Waples, acting secretary of state, furnishing information on actions of the Texian Boundary Line Commission.[49] Bonnell delivered two jobs after the Fifth Congress convened in early November. The House of Representatives ordered on November 11 that 200 copies of a Report of the Commissioner, General Land Office, November Seventeenth, 1840 should be printed at the Sentinel office. The 9-page pamphlet included a folding table and a report by John P. Borden that no progress had been made by commissioners who had been elected to detect fraudulent land certificates in the Republic.[50] In mid-November, Bonnell received a contract for printing 500 copies of the Message of the President, to the Fifth Congress of the Republic, Submitted Nov. Fourth, 1840. The 12-page speech was dated at the beginning, November 1, and was read before a joint session three days later. Haggling in Congress prevented Bonnell's getting the work any earlier than he did:

> The House had a hard time deciding how many copies of this Message . . . should be printed. A resolution adopted November 4 for printing five hundred copies of the Message . . . was reconsidered the next day. . . . On November 6 there were various notes about the number of copies of the Message to be printed, but at the end the number stood as before. The Journal of the Senate for November 9 . . . records passage of a resolution for printing 500 copies. . . .[51]

Mount Bonnell

Designation of the peak in west Austin as Mount Bonnell may have come as a pleasant afterthought to the Major's career as editor of the Sentinel. A popular argument, however, has grown up over the issue of who actually first named the mountain and when the name first was applied. John Henry Brown writes that, "In his honor, in 1838, General Edward Burleson bestowed the name (yet retained) of Bonnell on the now pleasant resort and beautiful mount four miles above Austin."[52] Bonnell, himself, refers to the mountain in his own name in his Description of Texas, published in April, 1840. Frank Brown contends, however, that the name ". . . was conferred by a prominent lady of the time named Barker, a widow, highly respected and admired."[53] To save the day, it would seem, an article published in 1965 reconciles the two points of view with what in itself is an interesting tale. Asserting that the peak

officially was named in 1841 at a party at Mrs. Barker's Inn some place in Austin, Mrs. Jessie McIlroy Smith, then chairman of the Travis County Historical Survey Committee, states that her research has revealed the gist of a conversation that passed that robust night between Bonnell and Teulon:

> "George," said George Bonnell to George Teulon,"we have decided to name yon mountain on the west side of the creek for you."
>
> Teulon reportedly waved his glass in the air and said, "No siree! There's two distinct mountains over there -- the peak with the bluffs dropping off to the river is for you, Bonnell. You know old Ed Burleson named that peak for you, and a general he is."
>
> Teulon added, "Now the beautiful solid mountain to the right of the peak is for you, Mrs. Barker. Yes, I know you and the others have called it Teulon for me, and I am forever grateful to you, My Lady."
>
> Teulon lifted his arm in a toast and bid everyone in the inn to do likewise: "So I raise a glass to honor the two of you. To Mount Bonnell and Mount Barker."[54]

Footnotes

[1]Frank Brown, "Annals of Travis County and of the City of Austin," (Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center Archives Collection, The University of Texas, Austin, 1954), Ch. VI, pp. 27-28. (Typewritten.) Cited hereafter as Brown's "Annals."

[2]Ibid.

[3]Stanley Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, 1836-1845 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1956), p. 146.

[4]Madeleine B. Sterne, "Jacob W. Cruger, Public Printer of Houston," in Imprints on History: Book Publishers and American Frontiers (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956), p. 128.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Texas Sentinel (Austin), Jan. 25, 1840.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]John P. G. McKenzie, "Mount Bonnell: It Used To Be Antonette's Leap," in The Austin Statesman, Feb. 15, 1965, p. 13.

[11]James David Carter, Masonry in Texas: Background, History, and Influence to 1846 (Waco: Committee on Masonic Education and Service For the Grand Lodge of Texas A. F. and A. M., 1955), pp. 320, 324, 328, 331, 343.

[12]Letter from Dixie T. Milton, assistant librarian, The Grand Lodge of Texas Library, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, Waco, Texas, Jan. 17, 1966.

[13]Francis R. Lubbock, Six Decades in Texas, ed. C. W. Raines (Austin: Ben C. Jones & Co., 1900), p. 85.

[14]Brown's "Annals," VII, p. 41.

[15]Constitution and By-Laws of the Travis Guards: Adopted March First, 1840 (photocopy; Austin: Cruger and Bonnell's Print, 1840), pp. 15-16.

[16]Ibid., p. 3.

[17]Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[18]Ibid., p. 14.

[19]Ibid.

[20]H. P. N. Gammel, (ed.), The Laws of Texas 1822-1897, Vol. II: Laws of Texas 1839-1846 (Austin: Gammel Book Company, 1898), p. 52.

[21]Discussed in detail in chapter 3.

[22]Mary Starr Barkley, History of Travis County and Austin, 1839-1899 (Waco: Texian Press, 1963), p. 210.

[23]Texas Sentinel, April 1, 1840.

[24]Ibid., April 8, 1840.

[25]See Texas Sentinel, May 9, 1840.

[26]Texas Sentinel, Feb. 26, 1840.

[27]Ibid., March 18, 1840.

[28]Ibid., Feb. 26, 1840.

[29]Austin City Gazette, Sept. 23, 1840.

[30]Discussed in detail in chapter 4.

[31]J. L. Sinks, "Journalists of Austin in 1840," in Galveston News, May 7, 1876.

[32]Texas Sentinel issues of July 11 and 18 are missing.

[33]Texas Sentinel issue of Aug. 8 is missing.

[34]See Texas Sentinel, Dec. 26, 1840.

[35]See Texas Sentinel issues of Nov. 21 and 28, Dec. 5 and 12, 1840.

[36]Sterne, p. 128.

[37]Ibid., pp. 129-130.

[38]Thomas W. Streeter, Bibliography of Texas, 1795-1845, Part I: Texas Imprints (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), I, p. lii.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Ibid., II, p. 348.

[42]Ibid., p. 553.

[43]Ibid., p. 317.

[44]Ibid., pp. 325-326.

[45]Ibid., pp. 326-327.

[46]Ibid., p. 336.

[47]Ibid., p. 337.

[48]Ibid., p. 347.

[49]Ibid., pp. 334-335.

[50]Ibid., pp. 335-336.

[51]Ibid., p. 343.

[52]John Henry Brown and William S. Speer, The Encyclopedia of the New West (Marshall, Texas: The United States Bibliographical Publishing Company, 1881), p. 574.

[53]Brown's "Annals," VI, p. 62.

[54]Nat Henderson, "Bonnell Named At 1841 Party," in The Austin Statesman, Feb. 8, 1965.

CHAPTER III

A GUIDE FOR EMIGRANTS

Barely four years after he had entered the Republic, George W. Bonnell produced a book about the territory he had come to love during his travels as army officer, private citizen, and public official. One of the earliest and perhaps the most valuable contemporary emigrant's guides to the region, Bonnell's Topographical Description of Texas. To Which is Added an Account of the Indian Tribes was first published at the office of his and Jacob W. Cruger's Texas Sentinel in Austin in April, 1840. The Sentinel had hinted first on January 22, 1840, of the forthcoming publication: "We design publishing immediately after the adjournment of Congress, a general and topographical description of Texas."

In issuing his book, Bonnell had joined the ranks of writers and travelers who were realizing an opportunity to capitalize on the new Republic by supplying information to countless thousands both in the United States and in Western Europe. Orceneth Fisher, a Methodist preacher who published his Sketches of Texas in 1840 at Springfield, Ill., the next year, commented typically on the desire for news about Texas:

> She has suffered but little disturbance from abroad, since the year 1836, and her population has increased perhaps without a parallel in the history of nations. Her healthful climate, rich soil, valuable timber, commercial advantages, etc. etc. have already attracted the attention of the enterprising both in the United States and other countries; so that information more full and accurate is demanded by all parties and all classes. The farmer, the mechanic, the merchant, the lawyer, the christian [sic], and the minister of Christ, are all presenting their inquiries respecting this new and interesting country.[1]

Texas, it was said, satisfied ". . . the desire for land and the wish to start life in a new country, free from debt and removed from painful surroundings. . . ."[2] Arthur Ikin, another example, came to Texas in January, 1841, bringing two commercial treaties from Great Britain; Ikin returned to London in May that same year and shortly thereafter his book, Texas: Its History, Topography, Agriculture, Commerce and General Statistics, was published. More an attempt to propagandize, advertising pamphlets of the Galveston Bay and

Texas Land Company were widely circulated in the 1830's. Mary Austin Holley's Texas, printed in Baltimore in 1833, was based on a series of letters written during the author's visit to Stephen F. Austin's colony in the fall of 1831. William Kennedy's 1841 work, The Rise, Progress, and Prospects of Texas, was slanted for a European audience, while the author of Texas in 1840: or, the Emigrant's Guide to the New Republic, remains anonymous.

In a frontispiece for his book, addressed "TO THE PUBLIC," Bonnell issued a mild apology:

> In preparing this small volume on the TOPOGRAPHY OF TEXAS, I have endeavored to present the country to the reader precisely as it is at the present time. But I am aware that our rapidly increasing population produces important changes at the end of every month; and a section of country that is wild and uninhabited may, at the end of two or three months, be filled with a dense population. Under these circumstances, entire correctness cannot be expected; but the description of the soil and surface of the earth, is believed to be nearly correct.[3]

"My object in writing this work," he explained, "is to present to the world, a faithful description of the situation of Texas at the present time. . . ."[4] Bonnell concluded by saying that he hoped . . .

> . . . to give a plain and unvarnished tale of the whole truth, and to present to the emigrant a faithful delineation of the advantages and disadvantages of settling in the new Republic. I shall first give a topographical description of the whole country, and conclude by giving such sketches of its political history as will enable every individual to understand the present condition and future prospects of Texas.[5]

Bonnell's book was well received almost immediately. Even the Texas Sentinel's often-caustic rival, the Austin City Gazette of Samuel Whiting, praised the work in its issue of April 1, 1840:

> Of all the descriptions of this Republic, this is the best that we have seen, as far as the topography of the country is concerned. At the end of the volume, a brief account is given of the various tribes of Indians within the boundaries of Texas; it is principally copied from the report made by Mr. Bonnell as commissioner for Indian Affairs under the administration of General Houston, which was, at the time, considered as a very true and able document.[6]

At Brazoria, R. L. Weir's Brazos Courier of May 5, 1840, lauded the work with the following review:

> Unlike most of the catch penny publications of the day, purporting to be Histories of Texas, this is a work of genuine merit, containing in a small compass much useful and valuable information. We recommend it to the attention of emigrants and others who are seeking

TOPOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION

OF

TEXAS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED, AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

INDIAN TRIBES.

BY GEO. W. BONNELL,

AUSTIN:
PUBLISHED BY CLARK, WING, AND BROWN.
1840.

Title Page From George Bonnell's Book on Texas

information respecting this highly favored country.

The Morning Star at Houston commented on the book on April 14, 1840, in which issue the editors expressed the conviction that the work would . . .

> . . . be of great value to everyone interested in Texas; as it contains a very faithful and accurate description of the harbors along our coast, and of the rivers, soils, and products of the whole country. It displays an intimate acquaintance with the subject at hand; and does much credit to the author.

From London, England, came a letter dated July 16, 1840, in which Arthur Ikin told Bonnell, "Many thanks for your able and interesting little work on Texas. I have read it with pleasure, and by its aid, removed some of the ignorance and prejudice, which I am sorry to say exists here on the subject, as formidably as ever."[7]

A second issue of Bonnell's Topographical Description of Texas apparently was published late in 1841. One such copy located, bound in printed board covers, carries an advertisement on the back cover for "Walker's Third Edition of the Presidents' Messages . . . from Washington's to Tyler's last Message, December, 1841."[8] This advertisement begins, "Cheap and Substantial Bookbinding, at E. Walker's Old Stand, No. 112 Fulton Street, New York," suggesting that Walker bound the second issue.[9] Of the latter issue, Thomas W. Streeter says:

> The pagination and text are the same in both issues and the titles line off the same, but the preliminary matter, signature, has been reset for this issue with slight changes in the title page -- a comma after "Added" and after "Bonnell," an "and" instead of an ampersand in the imprint, and "Austin" in a light faced type of the same font as the rest of the imprint instead of in a bold faced squat type of a different font as in the earlier issue. There are also many changes in the first signature, among them being "Arkansas bay" instead on "Aransas bay" on page iii, and "Navidad . . ." as the last line of page vii instead of the first line of page viii.[10]

Bonnell must have contemplated the chance to write a guide to Texas years earlier, and perhaps no one in the Republic in 1840 was more capable to undertake the task. During private travels and campaigns with the Texas army in 1838 and 1839, Bonnell often shipped to certain Texas newspapers pieces of rock or samples of cotton gathered up along the way, or a written account of a particular region through which his brigade had trekked. The Telegraph and Texas Register, often a beneficiary of Bonnell's enthusiasm for Texas, carried an article on June 23, 1838, which commented on the man's qualifications:

> We feel ourselves deeply indebted to Maj. Bonnell for his

> excellent communication relative to the commercial and agricultural resources of Texas. Few citizens of this country are more capable of furnishing correct information upon these subjects. He has travelled over almost every portion of the republic from the Sabine to the Rio Grande, and speaks from personal observation of many of the sections he describes. This communication furnishes throughout corroborating testimony of the accuracy of the geographical descriptions of the counties we have heretofore published.

The Telegraph had acknowledged, one week earlier, receipt from Bonnell of a boll of cotton, which the paper stated . . .

> . . . was picked from some plants near San Patricio, that were planted in 1838. This cotton has an excellent staple, and many planters who have examined it, represent it as being equal to the finest of Sea Island. We have also received from the same hand, a small piece of the Iron ore, which is found in great quantities on the Cibolo, near Bexar. This specimen is the magnetic oxide of Iron, and is of an excellent quality. . . . Bonnell states that two very extensive beds of Coal have recently been discovered in the same vicinity.[11]

The same issue carried a half-column story on page 2 entitled "Geography of Texas," in which Bonnell discussed San Patricio -- the lakes, soils, surface, crops, and towns of this region whose boundaries at that time were yet undefined.

Publishers of Bonnell's book were Joseph Addison Clark, Martin Carroll Wing, and John Henry Brown, employes of the Sentinel and associates of Bonnell. Eager to promote their book, the three men inserted an advertisement in the Texas Sentinel on April 1, 1840, for "Topographical Description of Texas -- Just published and for sale at this office." Clark, desirous of having his share of the books bound, departed for New Orleans. On the return trip, however, Clark was attacked by Indians at some point between Lavaca Bay and Austin and, though he survived, his entire collection was lost.[12]

Consisting of 150 pages in 22 chapters and measuring 4x6 inches, the Topographical Description of Texas contains, in addition to a list of 53 proper names and the author's general remarks about the Republic, detailed chapter studies of Sabine Bay, Galveston Bay, Matagorda Bay, La Baca Bay, Espiritu Santo Bay, Aransas Bay, Corpus Christi Bay, Lagune de la Madra, and the tributaries of each of these; the Red River, San Luis harbor, the Brazos River "and its branches," the San Bernard and Old Caney rivers, the Rio Grande, counties and county seats, officers of government, supreme court, circuit court, judicial districts, and the Indian tribes.[13] Descriptions of towns, accounts of commercial and agricultural activities and trade routes, and notes on scenic spots are intermingled with the general narrative.

"COPY-RIGHT secured in the Republic of Texas and in the United States, according to law, in the year 1840," (the imprint for which appears on page iv), was obtained in the Republic under provisions of Congress. Secretary of State Robert A. Irion first had recommended on November 20, 1837, that Texas grant copyrights, and President Mirabeau B. Lamar eventually approved an act January 28, 1839, which allowed 14-year patent rights for "composition of matter, liberal arts, sciences or literature, books, maps or charts." Citizens and those who filed intentions of becoming citizens were given a copyright for a $30 fee. Only three copyrights were issued by the Republic and Bonnell's book was the only one of the three actually published.[14]

Each of Bonnell's descriptions reflects the authority of first-hand knowledge. He pictured Enchanted Rock, a bald, oval-shaped granite mountain covering 640 acres in northeastern Gillespie County,[15] 18 miles north of Fredericksburg:

> About twenty-five miles from the Colorado, on one of the branches of this river, is the celebrated enchanted rock. It is about two hundred feet high, of an oval form, similar to an egg, half imbedded in the soil. It is held sacred by the Indians, and at stated periods, they perform their dances and make sacrifices to the Great Spirit, at this place. There is a spring of water which comes out of it near the top, and spreads over and covers a portion of it with water. It is composed of different colored flint, and has a most brilliant appearance when the sun shines upon it. Of a dark night, it has the appearance of being brilliantly illuminated, which is supposed to be caused by some phosphoric substance. An Indian never passes it without paying his devotion to the Great Spirit.[16]

In describing the fertile plains watered by branches of numerous streams west and north of Austin, Bonnell also forecast the fate of the Indian in the Republic:

> The prairies are covered with flowers at nearly every season of the year, and so remarkable has it been for its beauty, that it has received the name of Teha Lanna or the land of beauty, from the Comanche Indians. Immense herds of buffalo, wild cattle, deer, and wild horses, are found in all parts of this section of the Republic. It has long been the most favorite hunting ground of the wild Indians, which has heretofore prevented its settlement. But several settlements have recently been commenced upon the Little river and its branches, and the wild Indian will soon have to give place to civilization. A chain of block houses are soon to be thrown across the country, and a sufficient number of troops stationed upon the frontier to protect the settlements, and it is hoped this beautiful country will soon be made the abode of civilized man.[17]

Of the 755-foot-high promontory rising west of Austin, the author

remarked:

> Four miles above the city, upon the east side of the river, is a high peak, called Mount Bonnell. From the top of the mountain there is a perpendicular precipice of seven hundred feet down to the water. The prospect from the top of this mountain, is one of the grandest and loveliest in nature. On the north and west extend the mountain peaks, rising in bold magnificence hill above hill, for a distance of twenty miles. And though what are here called mountains, would in many countries be looked upon as inconsiderable hills, they form a bold contrast to the flower clad prairie, which stretches off to the south and east as far as the eye can extend. The Colorado river is seen for the distance of fifteen miles winding its course among the hills and rich valleys; below us is the infant city, which completes the prospect and renders it one of the loveliest upon earth.[18]

Wherever possible, it would seem, Bonnell injected local history into his description of a particular region. An example is his account of a fascinating story surrounding the legendary silver mines of San Saba:

> About thirty miles from the mouth of this [San Saba] river was once an old Spanish mission and fort, which was destroyed by the Comanche Indians more than a hundred years ago. Tradition has located a valuable silver mine near this place, but its precise location is unknown.
>
> The Mexican tradition gives the following history of the destruction of this fort: "It was in a situation of great prosperity, and carrying on an extensive trade with the Comanche Indians in furs, peltries [sic], &c., and the mines yielded a rich profit in bullion. There were about one hundred laborers in the mines, and one hundred soldiers for the protection of the posts -- and a number of women, who were principally engaged in the manufacture of articles for the Indian trade. Nearly all the soldiers were out upon an expedition, and the Comanches came down, apparently to trade, and were admitted into the fort in great numbers. There was [sic] not more than a dozen soldiers to defend the post. At a signal given by the chief, the Indians drew concealed weapons from under their buffalo robes, and assassinated every soldier within the fort. They then made an attack upon the portion occupied by the women, and soon massacred them all. The laborers in the mines fled in every direction, and having no arms, were easily despatched one at a time. The priest alone made his escape, and that by a miracle: he fled to the river and the waters opened, as the Red sea did for the Israelites of old, and suffered him to pass through on dry land, and as the Indians pursued, closed up and swept them to a common grave. The priest, after great suffering, reached the Spanish mission of San Juan, which was, at that time, the only Spanish settlement upon the San Antonio river. The soldiers, a few days after, returned to the fort and found the mangled bodies of their companions, and the banks of the river covered with dead Indians, and as they could see no marks of violence upon them, they

> pronounced it a miracle:" and the river, from that circumstance, received the name of the "Brazos de Deos," or the "Arm of God;" but in the little which was known of this country, the name got changed to the Colorado, which was formerly applied to the Brazos river -- which is a much more appropriate name, for "Colorado" means red, and the Colorado is a very clear stream. This tradition is believed by all the old Mexicans about San Antonio. The soldiers did not attempt to renew the post, but repaired to the settlement on the San Antonio river.[19]

Bonnell lamented the disreputable state of the San Antonio de Valero Mission, calling it the "old dismantled Alamo. . . . It is now a heap of ruins."[20] The author recalled how the Mexican officer, Vicente Filisola, had ordered the mission blown up and destroyed four years before, during his retreat from Texas; Bonnell then predicted:

> This place has been consecrated by the blood of a Travis, a Bowie, and a Bonham, and will be held sacred by the Texan people as long as chivalry shall be considered a virtue.[21]

Near Lynchburg and the new town of San Jacinto, Bonnell wrote, ". . . is the battle ground of San Jacinto; where on the 21st of April, 1836, the Mexican army, commanded by General Santa Anna, surrendered to the Texians, under the command of General Sam Houston."[22]

In the chapter on Matagorda Bay and its tributaries, Bonnell recorded the discovery of a huge, fossilized Pleistocene elephant skeleton, which had been dug up near Bastrop on the banks of the Colorado:

> The bones appear to be different from those of the mastadon -- having been furnished with horns of ten or twelve feet in length, and of eight inches in diameter. The bones were larger than any of those found in the Mississippi valley.[23]

Some of the teeth found with the skeleton, Bonnell said, ". . . weighed from twelve to fifteen pounds."[24]

Not all of Texas, however, was open to Bonnell's eye. Referring to country along the Red River in north Texas, particularly a region in which the boundary of the Republic at that time crossed the Red River and ran north to the Arkansas River, he admitted, "This portion of the country is so little known, that I shall not attempt to describe it. . . . [It] is now in the possession of the Comanche Indians."[25]

Physical geography would not be the only subject covered in the Description of Texas. Included just before the account of the Indian tribes are lists of the officers of the government of the Republic in 1840 and members of the Supreme Court. This judicial body, Bonnell stated:

> is to be holden annually, at the seat of government, and commences on the second Monday in January. It is composed of the Chief Justice and the Judges of the Circuit Courts, as associate justices.[26]

Explaining the structure of the circuit court system, Bonnell wrote:

> THE REPUBLIC is divided into seven judicial districts. The law makes it necessary that each judge shall reside at some place within his own district.[27]

This statement was followed by a list of the judges and a complete listing of the meeting places and meeting dates of the seven district courts. A table was included listing the thirty-two counties and each county seat.

Comparing the government of the Republic with that of the United States in 1840, Bonnell noted one difference: "Our government is similar to the . . . United States -- except ours is a consolidation instead of a confederated republic." "Our courts," he boasted, "are as well organised [sic], and the administration of justice is as certain as it is in the United States. The English common law, modified by statutes, is the rule of action both in criminal and civil proceedings."[28]

Discussing the aspects of slavery in the Republic, Bonnell reflected upon the laws of Texas which forbade the African slave trade, but which allowed slaves to be brought in from the United States:

> Persons emigrating from the United States can bring as many negro slaves with them as they wish, and hold them upon the same term that they held them in the slave holding states of the union. But it is the only country from which they can be introduced; and the law cannot be evaded by indenting the slaves to their masters, who emigrate from any other country. Negroes cannot be introduced into this country in any other way but as slaves -- and consequently they could not come as apprentices indented for a term of years.[29]

The exclusion of free Negroes and the few exceptions to this practice also was noted:

> A free negro cannot even be allowed to live in the country, without a special enactment of Congress (of the Republic) -- a privilege which is very rarely extended. The privilege of remaining . . . has not been extended to more than five or six negroes: all of those sustained good characters, and had rendered important services to the country during the revolution; and for them the privilege was procured with great difficulty.[30]

On the other hand, Bonnell explained, ". . . free white persons, from every country, are put upon an equal footing; no tedious naturalization laws are required; and whether the emigrant is from the United States, Europe, or other countries, if he is a free white person, he can hold land, and is entitled to

all privileges of citizenship, when he has declared his intention of becoming a citizen, and remained within the limits of the Republic for six months."[31]

What Bonnell must have considered a mistaken attitude on the part of outsiders regarding the crudeness of life in Texas was rebuffed by this declaration:

> The society in this Republic is much better than it is supposed to be, by the people of the States; and a smile is not unfrequently provoked at the expense of the young man who comes from that country loaded down with pistols and knives.[32]

"The wearing of concealed weapons," Bonnell insisted, "is so unusual in this country, that any person who wears them, is sure to become an object of suspicion."[33]

The author painted a sweeping portrait of the agricultural promises of the Republic when he expounded:

> Every portion of Texas, south of the Red river, will produce the best kind of cotton; and for more than one hundred miles from the coast, it is not surpassed by any country for the production of sugar -- above that point, small grain: rye, oats, barley, and wheat, wherever it has been tried, may be produced in great abundance. Every portion of the country produces good Indian corn, and horses, mules, cattle, and hogs may be raised with great profit in every portion of the Republic.
>
> Peaches, plumbs [sic], apricots, and figs are raised upon every portion of the country -- oranges and lemons upon the coast, and apples in the interior.[34]

On the subject of the planting season and the expense of maintaining a plantation, Bonnell elaborated:

> Cotton may be planted from two to three weeks earlier in the spring than it can in Mississippi; and the picking season in the fall continues much later -- the soil is much more productive than the best Mississippi or Louisiana land: and the planter may reasonably calculate upon saving one third more than he could in those states.
>
> Hands may be supported in Texas at a much cheaper rate than they can in any portion of the United States. Besides cultivating more cotton than they can save, they can raise more corn than can be consumed upon a plantation, and stock is so easily raised that horses and mules, cattle and hogs scarcely cost the planter a moment's thought -- they keep fat at all seasons of the year upon our luxuriant prairies, and it is the planters, [sic] own fault if he has to purchase anything for the use of his plantation; $500 invested in stock will support a plantation of fifty negroes.
>
> Nor are the inducements less flattering to the farmer

> who has to depend upon the labor of his own hands. Our rapidly increasing population furnishes an abundant market . . . and if that market should ever fail, we can, more easily than any other country, supply the whole West India market.[35]

"Lands that would cost from five dollars to fifty in the United States," he exclaimed, "can here be purchased at from twenty-five cents to five dollars per acre, and undisputed titles given."[36]

> But persons wishing to emigrate to this country should not purchase unlocated lands in the United States, nor even lands that are located, unless it is from an individual in whom he has the utmost confidence. And even then, the best way will be to come to the country, seek, examine and purchase for themselves. A person who will pursue this course cannot fail of being well pleased.[37]

Bonnell was remarkably accurate in his prediction of the usefulness of the Colorado river system as a potential source of power:

> The large springs in the hills, a few miles west of the City of Austin, afford the finest water power in the world. They have a sufficient supply of water for all the purposes of machinery. They are never affected by long droughts, nor heavy rains, and there would, consequently, be a constant supply of water, without any danger of the works being carried off by floods.[38]

Indeed, rivers of the Republic apparently induced Bonnell to some of his more lengthy and picturesque descriptions. Of the Pedernales River, he wrote:

> The Piednernales [sic] river is a large stream which enters the Colorado twenty-two miles above the City of Austin, from the west; and though it is but sixty-five or seventy miles in length, it receives so many of those large mountain springs, that when it unites with the Colorado, it is difficult to tell which is the largest [sic] stream. It has very deep banks, (flowing through a country almost entirely composed of elevated table land) with bottoms of not more than from one to three hundred yards in width. These bottoms are covered with a thick growth of cypress timber, and are bounded by perpendicular rocks, frequently of three hundred feet in height. The stream is gentle and smooth, and the timber may be floated down to Austin without difficulty. The river is composed almost entirely of springs, and so pure and transparent is the water that pebbles may be seen at the bottom in forty feet water. After ascending the rock from the cypress bottom, we reach a rich, level musquit [sic] prairie of great extent. It has a great quantity of musquit timber, with occasional groves of live and post oak, with considerable cedar.
>
> . . .
>
> On the Piedernales, and in fact every portion of the

> hilly country, almost every hollow tree is filled with bees. They make more honey than in any country I have ever seen, so the country literally flows with milk and honey.[39]

Bonnell reported that the entrance at Matagorda Bay to the Colorado River was blocked by a raft and boats were prevented from entering. He added, however, that "A company has been chartered for clearing it out -- the contract taken, and the stock subscribed for; and I am in hopes we shall soon see a good account of their labors."[40]

Beginning a lengthy description of the Rio Grande, he told an interesting story explaining why no steam boats were allowed to navigate up that river:

> It is eighteen hundred miles in length, but owing to its great rapidity and the innumerable rapids, it is of very little use for navigation above Laredo, situated about two hundred miles from the coast. To this place, a steam boat was once taken by Capt. Austin, but owing to the superstition of the Mexican people, and the attachment of the government to ancient practices, it was ordered off the river. An epidemic broke out upon the river about the time the boat made her trip, and the muleteers feared the ruin of their business, and the whole people united in a petition to the government to have the nuisance removed; their prayer was granted, and a decree passed that no steam boat should thereafter be allowed to run the river. Thus terminated the career of the first and last steam boat which ever made a trip upon the "grand river of the north."[41]

Bonnell's passing remark about one particular Mexican town is laden with irony. Reynosa, Camargo, Mier, and Revila were described as "four Mexican towns upon the south side of the Rio Grande, below Laredo. They are not places of much importance."[42] It would be just across the river from Mier, two and a half years later and only hours after the Battle of Mier, that Bonnell would be shot to death by a Mexican soldier.

But what of the Texans and their towns? Early in his Topographical Description of Texas, Bonnell marveled over the tremendous increase in population:

> In 1836, when it separated from Mexico, it contained but about twenty-five thousand inhabitants -- it now contains, as near as can be ascertained, two hundred and fifty thousand.[43]

In the last year alone, more than 50,000 emigrants had arrived at Galveston and an almost-equal number had crossed into Texas by land. "Cities are growing up, in places which a few years ago, were only inhabited by the wild beasts, and wilder savages, and civilization and refinement are rapidly taking possession of

the wilderness and bringing it under the dominion of man."[44] Apparently few towns or settlements escaped Bonnell's pen, and certainly his descriptions of the villages are as valuable today as his most convincing accounts of the countryside. His graphic picture of Austin in 1840, by then the capital of the Republic, is the longest such entry and perhaps the most complete.

> The CITY OF AUSTIN, the seat of government of the Republic of Texas, is situated upon the east side of the Colorado river, a short distance below a range of hills, known by the name of the Colorado mountains. . . .
>
> The public buildings are not elegant, but very comfortable and appropriate for a new government. Among them, the President's house stands conspicuous: it is situated upon a hill, and has a very commanding prospect over almost every portion of the city, and a view of the mountains, and the beautiful and picturesque country upon the west side of the river. The temporary capitol is situated upon another hill, about three hundred yards west of the President's house. It is a large one story frame building, very commodious, and will answer all the purposes for which it was intended, until the government shall be able to erect a more elegant and costly building.
>
> Congress has passed a law for the erection of a fire proof building, for the use of the general land office, and the state department. It has been contracted for, and will doubtless be finished in the course of the summer.
>
> A large three story brick hotel has been commenced, and is to be completed by the fall of 1840. The buildings are generally of a much better description than are usually built in new countries -- and the improvement of the city has progressed with a rapidity heretofore unknown, even in this country. It contains about four hundred houses and twelve hundred inhabitants. A Presbyterian church has been commenced, and I understand the Methodists have one under contract. -- The city contains two newspapers. [Bonnell's and Cruger's Texas Sentinel and Samuel Whiting's City Gazette.]
>
> . . . Like the ancient city of Rome, Austin is built upon seven hills, and it is impossible to conceive of a more beautiful and lovely situation. The streets are generally composed of gravel, which effectually protects them from mud at all seasons of the year.[45]

Nacogdoches was an old Spanish town situated on Nana Creek, a branch of the Angelina River. Founded more than a hundred years prior, Nacogdoches had dwindled to a mere village during the Revolution of 1836. "It once enjoyed a large commerce with the Indians, and had a population of near five thousand inhabitants. . . . It is the seat of justice of Nacogdoches county, and since the separation of Texas from Mexico, it has been rapidly improving."[46]

San Augustine, approximately 35 miles east of Nacogdoches, near the head of Ayish Bayou, was ". . . the most flourishing town in eastern Texas; and the fourth, in point of population, in the Republic."[47]

> It is the county seat of San Augustine county, and contains one thousand inhabitants. It has been built up within the last few years, and is improving with great rapidity. There is a weekly newspaper published in this city.[48]

At the time of writing, Bonnell must have been referring to W. W. Parker's Red-Lander, which was published at San Augustine until some time in December, 1839. The next weekly paper in that town, Alanson Wyllys Canfield's Journal and Advertiser, did not appear until late May, 1840.[49]

Houston, where Bonnell had lived before moving to Austin, was the only flourishing town on Buffalo Bayou, located ". . . at the junction of Buffalo and White Oak bayous, and at the head of steam boat navigation." Laid off in 1836, Houston had been capital of the Republic until the Congress of 1838-39 removed the seat of government to Austin.

> . . . It has very comfortable public buildings, and about four thousand inhabitants. Steam boats between this place and Galveston, run almost every day, and nearly all the emigrants from the United States, who come to this country by water, land at Galveston, and pass through Houston.
>
> During the first season, the places suffered much from sickness, but it was most probably owing to the exposed situation of the early settlers. They were thrown together from every part of the world, without houses, sleeping on the ground, with all the hardships incidental to the settlement of a new place. Since that season, the place has been comparatively healthy, until the latter part of the summer of 1839, when it suffered severely from the yellow fever.[51]

Another forecast evidently come true, Bonnell stated that he did not believe removal of the capital to Austin would "materially affect the prosperity of Houston." "It has," he remarked, "a weekly and daily newspaper published in the city."[52] These papers were Cruger's Telegraph and Texas Register and Morning Star, respectively.

Situated at a point where the Brazos crossed the main road between Houston and Austin (now US 90), San Felipe, Bonnell reminisced, ". . . was the first town settled by General Stephen F. Austin, and was looked upon as the capital of the new colony."[53]

> . . . It is agreeably situated upon a high bluff, and in a very excellent position to command a large proportion of the up country trade. . . . Previous to our revolution, it was in a very flourishing condition, but was burnt down

> to prevent its falling into the hands of the Mexicans, and has not since been rebuilt. It contains about two hundred inhabitants.[54]

Recalling another historic town, Washington-on-the-Brazos, Bonnell remarked, "The convention, which declared our independence and adopted the constitution, assembled at this place, and it was once thought that it would be the permanent location of the seat of government of Texas."[55] The author was dismayed that Houston had prospered at the expense of Washington:

> . . . the place is more celebrated for its good society and the hospitality of its inhabitants than for their enterprise; and the natural advantages which it possesses, have been neglected, and they have received all their goods through Houston, thus aiding to build up a rival town at the expense of their own prosperity. Instead of wagoning their own goods from Houston, they should have had a steam boat on the river, and supplied the whole up country. This would have added ten fold to the wealth and prosperity of the place. There is a newspaper [J. Warren J. Niles's Texas Emigrant] published in the town, which, I hope, will call the attention of the people to this subject.[56]

San Antonio, Bonnell wrote, ". . . contains about eight hundred Mexican, and about one hundred American inhabitants . . . mostly engaged in an extensive trade with the northern Mexican states."[57] His explanation of the problems then facing San Antonio is revealing:

> Sugar and cotton were once extensively cultivated about the city, and a considerable manufactory was established. But a series of misfortunes commencing with the Mexican revolution, has attended this ill-fated city ever since. At times it became the prey of its own factions and the different Indian tribes. It became the sport and by-word of the Comanches, and every petty Indian tribe exacted a tribute from its citizens. -- Under these circumstances, no place could flourish, and the town has been declining for many years; and the campaigns of 1835 and '36 left it almost a heap of ruins. It has been slowly recovering since that time -- but it will be long before it will reach its former grandeur.[58]

Describing the town proper, he continued:

> The city is built in the curves of the river -- upon the west side. It is built almost entirely of stone, and the houses so constructed as to be very readily converted into forts. They have flat roofs, are one story high, with walls of from three to four feet in thickness.
>
> The public squares are surrounded entirely by solid blocks of stone buildings -- and are capable of being converted, at the approach of an enemy into almost impregnable places of defence. The Mexican government always

> kept a large quantity of artillery for the defence of the city, but with all this outward show of strength, the wild Comanche was permitted to commit his depredations within the very walls of the city.[59]

The Spanish mission, Concepcion, on the east bank of the river, then two and a half miles below San Antonio, was ". . . once . . . a splendid building, but it is now only inhabited by bats and owls."[60] San Jose mission, four miles south of the city on the west bank, drew both praise and regret:

> It was once perhaps the most splendid specimen of Gothic architecture among the numerous specimens left by the early Spanish settlers. Attached to it were a college, a female institution, and a convent. It has suffered much from time, and more from the trespasses of visitors. It has now been converted into a military post, and a portion of the Texian troops are stationed at that place.[61]

Of the coastal towns of the Republic, Bonnell was most impressed with Galveston. He described Galveston Island:

> . . .thirty-five miles long and three and a half broad . . . parallel with the coast, from which it is separated by a sound, about three miles wide, and from four to eight feet deep. The island is entirely destitute of timber, but has a rich soil, and is well supplied with game -- deer in great abundance, and in the winter, every species of wild fowl. Fish and oysters are particularly fine, about the island, and very abundant.[62]

The town, he wrote, was . . .

> . . . situated at the east end of Galveston island, . . . laid out but two years and a half ago, . . . [it] did not commence improving until within the last eighteen months. It now contains a population of three thousand five hundred souls, and is increasing with great rapidity. It has three fine steam packets which perform regular trips between that place and New Orleans, and it is not uncommon to see from thirty to forty vessels, from different parts of the world, lying in the harbor. The principal channel has twelve feet water over the bar, and the harbor is safe and commodious. This place is destined at no distant period, to become a large and important city. It is the county seat of Galveston county, and contains a semi-weekly and a tri-weekly newspaper. It enjoys more commerce than all of the other ports of Texas.[63]

The semi-weekly paper Bonnell referred to was the Civilian and Galveston Gazette; the tri-weekly was the Galvestonian.

Approximately 75 miles by water from Galveston was Matagorda, ". . . a healthy and delightful situation . . . in the heart of one of the best planting regions in Texas."[64] Criticizing the difficulty Matagorda

faced in obtaining goods by water, Bonnell tendered comment on what must have been one of the earliest projects to dredge a ship channel for a Republic coastal town:

> The bay is from eighteen to twenty-five feet deep, for thirty-five miles, at which place it is obstructed by a bar, over which there is but two feet water. The bar is four miles above Palascious [sic], and seven below Matagorda; and vessels freighted for that port have to anchor in the bay, and transport their goods seven miles by lighters, to the city. The bar is not more than eighty yards in width, and the citizens of Matagorda have long been talking of opening a ship channel through the bar, which they believe could be done at a triffling expense. this would unquestionably make Matagorda one of the most important towns in the Republic, and the citizens should leave no art untried to accomplish so desirable an object. This improvement in the bay, and the removal of the raft at the mouth of the Colorado river, would give to Matagorda the commerce of the most fertile and wealthy portion of Texas; and if it can be effected, no expense should be regarded to procure so desirable a a [sic] change.[65]

The author praised Matagorda for its ". . . female institution of considerable reputation, and a newspaper printed in the city."[66] (The paper was the weekly Colorado Gazette and Advertiser.)

Located on the west bank of the San Antonio River, at the junction of the old Matamoros and Nacogdoches roads, was the Mexican town of Goliad, or La Bahia. Bonnell's picture of the destitute settlement is notable for his mention of Mission Espiritu Santo and Presidio La Bahia Chapel:

> It was settled about seventy-five years ago, and was once a place of considerable importance. It is built almost entirely of stone -- has a stone fort and church of great strength. For with the old Spaniards, their churches were always built so as to be readily converted into forts. It also has an old stone church upon the opposite side of the river where the town was first built. The town is now in ruins -- it was destroyed during our revolution, and has not since been rebuilt. This town was built upon a rock, and is one of the best natural places for defence in any country. The Spanish government had spared no expense in its fortification, and when they had brought it to that point of defence which they considered impregnable, its name was changed from "La Bahia" to Goliad -- the place of strength. It is now entirely dismantled and does not contain more than from thirty to forty inhabitants.[67]

For some reason, no mention was made of the massacre of Colonel James Fannin and his men in March, 1836, at this site.

Bonnell's account of the Indian tribes in the Republic consumes the last 20 pages of his book. Much of this section was copied and condensed from the report he made in November, 1838, as commissioner of Indian affairs under Sam Houston. In this report, he noted that in most instances he had visited the tribes in person or derived his information from Indian agents. His tales of various Indian outrages, treacheries, and disregard of treaties are surpassed only by his vivid pictures and burning criticisms of the Indians themselves. "The Cherokees and their twelve associated bands," Bonnell wrote, "are all tribes from the United States."[68] The expulsion of these tribes from Texas in the few years immediately preceding the writing of the book, some action in which Bonnell had played a part, was condensed also from his 1838 Report and brought up to date through July, 1839, in the Description of Texas. This section -- though brief -- is especially interesting for its evaluation of the Indian policy of the Republic in the early years.[69] The Austin City Gazette, however, apparently doubted the consistency of Bonnell's appraisal in the two documents since Bonnell defended the validity of his chapter on Indian policy with a statement directed at George Teulon, published in the Texas Sentinel on April 1, 1840:

> The editor of the Gazette accuses the author of the Topographical description of Texas of . . . having changed his opinions on the subject of Indian relations since the publication of his official report to Congress, as Commissioner of Indian affairs in 1838. The gentleman surely never compared the articles; we defy him to point to a principle that is laid down in the one that differs from the principles of the other.

Regrettably, Bonnell never got around to writing an enlarged edition, with a map, that he hinted might be forthcoming in the winter of 1840 or the next spring.[70] Today, not more than two dozen copies of the original printings are known to exist. Issues at The University of Texas and the State Archives and Library in Austin are bound in plain, brown boards with "Texas" stamped in gilt on the spine. A copy of the second issue at the State Archives is bound in blue-green cloth, which may be original.[71]

When C. W. Raines compiled his Bibliography of Texas in 1896, Bonnell's Topographical Description of Texas apparently had little monetary value, since Raines refers to the work as having been "quite valuable once."[72] James M. Day, in his introduction to the Texian Press reprint of the book, reports, however, that in 1932 the Texas State Library purchased two copies, one of which was incomplete, for $32.50 each. In 1956, one bookseller

recorded a sale of the Bonnell work for $450. "With that," Day writes, "the work of George W. Bonnell has come full circle. It has monetary value as well as historical value."[73]

Emigrants, too, must have felt the book served its purpose, the gist of which the author had explained:

> I have endeavored in this work to give a plain and unvarnished description of the whole surface of the country -- so that the emigrant, may read, and at once decide what portion of the country will suit him best. . . .[74]

Thirty-eight years later, an unnamed Galveston journalist mused over the book and wrote his sentiments, which might be considered universal:

> Rummaging among a lot of old books the other day, the writer came across a little volume which has been neglected since the time of its publication in 1840 . . . written by Maj. Geo. W. Bonnell. . . . it presents a pretty fair picture of the population, settlements, industries, and general condition of the then republic of Texas. Considering the terra incognita that then constituted by far the greater part of the country, it is wonderful to contemplate the amount of interesting and generally accurate information that the author was able to present. . . .[75]

Footnotes

[1]Orceneth Fisher, Sketches of Texas in 1840 (reprint; Waco: Texian Press, 1964; first published in 1841: Springfield, Ill.: Walters & Weber, Printers), p. vii.

[2]Stanley Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, 1836-1845 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1956), p. 6.

[3]George W. Bonnell, Topographical Description of Texas. To Which is Added an Account of the Indian Tribes (reprint; Waco: Texian Press, 1964), p. v. This work first was published by Clark, Wing, and Brown at the office of the Texas Sentinel in Austin in April, 1840, and a second issue was printed late in 1841. Thomas Streeter's analysis of the book makes it obvious that the Texian Press reprint is of the second issue.

[4]Ibid., p. 8.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Quoted in Thomas W. Streeter, Bibliography of Texas, 1795-1845, Part I: Texas Imprints (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), II, p. 311.

[7]Texas Sentinel (Austin), Oct. 10, 1840.

[8]Streeter, p. 310.

[9]Ibid., p. 311.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston), June 16, 1838.

[12]Streeter, I, pp. lii-liii.

[13]Bonnell, p. iii.

[14]Walter Prescott Webb, et al. (eds.), The Handbook of Texas (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1952), I, p. 411; also, Streeter, II, p. 311, reports he found no reference to the Republic copyright procedure in either James W. Dallam's Digest of the Laws of Texas, published in Baltimore in 1845, or C. W. Raines's Analytical Index to the Laws of Texas, 1823-1905.

[15]Webb, p. 566.

[16]Bonnell, pp. 79-80.

[17]Ibid., pp. 46-47.

[18]Ibid., p. 66.

[19]Ibid., pp. 82-83.

[20]Ibid., p. 97.

[21]Ibid., pp. 97-98.

[22]Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[23]Ibid., pp. 61-62; the find also was discussed in the Telegraph and Texas Register, April 15 and July 8, 1840.

[24]Bonnell, p. 62.

[25]Ibid., pp. 18-19.

[26]Ibid., p. 123.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., p. 121.

[29]Ibid., p. 120.

[30]Ibid., pp. 120-121.

[31]Ibid., p. 121.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid., pp. 121-122.

[35]Ibid., pp. 118-119.

[36]Ibid., p. 119.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid., pp. 68-69.

[39]Ibid., pp. 79-80.

[40]Ibid., p. 56.

[41]Ibid., p. 113.

[42]Ibid., p. 114.

[43]Ibid., p. 8.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid., pp. 64-65.

[46]Ibid., p. 14.

[47]Ibid., p. 15.

[48] Ibid.

[49] John M. Wallace, "Gaceta to Gazette: A Check List of Texas Newspapers, 1813-1846" (typescript; Austin, 1966), p. 27.

[50] Bonnell, p. 28.

[51] Ibid., pp. 28-29.

[52] Ibid., p. 29.

[53] Ibid., p. 38.

[54] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

[55] Ibid., pp. 41-42.

[56] Ibid., p. 41.

[57] Ibid., p. 98.

[58] Ibid., pp. 96-97.

[59] Ibid., p. 97.

[60] Ibid., p. 98.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[63] Ibid., p. 20.

[64] Ibid., p. 55.

[65] Ibid., p. 54.

[66] Ibid., p. 55.

[67] Ibid., p. 93.

[68] Ibid., p. 140.

[69] Discussed in detail in chapter 1.

[70] Bonnell, p. v.

[71] See Streeter, pp. 310-311, for locations of 22 copies.

[72] C. W. Raines, Bibliography of Texas (Austin: Gammel Book Co., 1896), p. 27.

[73] James M. Day, "Introduction," in George W. Bonnell, Topographical Description of Texas . . . (reprint; Waco: Texian Press, 1964), p. [iv].

[74]Bonnell, pp. 119-120.

[75]Galveston News, Nov. 14, 1878.

CHAPTER IV

OF BUSINESS, CULTURE, AND WAR: BONNELL'S LAST YEARS

George Bonnell relinquished his control over the Texas Sentinel within months after his Topographical Description of Texas had been published. As editor and publisher, the Major alone had managed the newspaper since his partnership with Jacob W. Cruger was dissolved July 28, 1840.[1] On December 26, however, the Sentinel announced the return of Cruger, who, with Martin Carroll Wing, by then Cruger's publisher, had purchased the paper from Bonnell.[2]

A Corporation Tycoon?

Much more than Cruger's purchase offer may have tempted Bonnell to divest himself of the duties of running the Texas Sentinel. With an eye toward more promising profits, Bonnell even may have welcomed the chance to suspend his newspaper career. He lingered in Austin after his concern in the paper ceased and before many weeks had passed had embarked upon what probably was his most enterprising commercial venture. Having allied himself with three other Texians and two London, England, promoters, Bonnell was named an incorporator of the "Texas Trading, Mining, and Emigrating Company," chartered by the Fifth Congress of the Republic of Texas on January 30, 1841.[3] Bonnell's British partners were Jonathan and Arthur Ikin, father and son, who had arrived in Texas that same month bringing two commercial treaties from Great Britain.[4] The congressional act provided the company with ". . . the right to purchase lands, and settle emigrants . . ." and the power ". . . to erect all necessary buildings for the use of the corporation, and to introduce goods. . . ."[5] All business of the infant company was to be conducted by a board of five directors, who in turn were authorized to select a president from among their own number.[6] ". . . The capital stock of said company, shall be five hundred thousand dollars, to be divided into five thousand shares, of one hundred dollars each."[7] Significantly enough, the Texas Trading, Mining, and Emigrating Company could establish mercantile houses and carry on trade with both Mexicans and Indians, ". . . providing they introduce no contraband articles, nor do any other thing which is prohibited by the Constitution and

laws of this Republic."[8]

For the purpose of establishing and protecting their trading posts, the corporation was empowered to raise and retain in service 300 troops, provided, in this case, ". . . that said troops shall be commanded by officers who have taken the oath of allegiance to the Republic . . . and be governed by the laws and regulations for the government of her own troops."[9] Furthermore, the act stated that . . .

> . . . should the aforesaid troops be called into the service of the Republic, they shall receive the same pay and emoluments as other troops of like grade receive. . . .[10]

The final section of the act announced that the charter would be in force ". . . for twenty years from and after its passage."[11]

Nothing is known about Bonnell's activities with the Texas Trading, Mining, and Emigrating Company, and no later references to the venture have been located to suggest that it ever got off the ground. Arthur Ikin returned to England in May of that same year. Shortly afterward, he published an emigrant's guide to the Republic, based on his travels during his four-month stay. One author has commented, "Ikin and his father were still interested in Texas land in 1845, but nothing is known of them thereafter."[12] It is possible the enterprise was abandoned. Perhaps the incorporators were induced to postpone their plans; perhaps Bonnell's fancy had been arrested by an even more grandiose scheme: on the horizon, rumors already were breeding controversy over President Lamar's plans to send a commercial expedition westward to conquer Santa Fe.

The Austin Lyceum

At any rate, George Bonnell's name again was up before the Fifth Congress a mere five days later. His interest in the cultural life of the capital apparently unquenched, he was one of nine incorporators early in February, 1841, of the Austin Lyceum, an association devoted to the "mutual mental improvement of its members, and the encouragement of a taste for literature and science. . . ."[13] Approved on February 4, the act for incorporation provided that the Austin Lyceum . . .

> . . . for the encouragement of literary and scientific pursuits, . . . may receive, hold, and enjoy, lands, tenements, and hereditaments, and personal property, and sums of money of any amount not exceeding fifty thousand dollars. . . . That the aforesaid persons, their associates, and successors, shall have access to the books in the public library at Austin. . . .[14]

In addition to incorporators Bonnell, George K. Teulon, and Richard Fox Brenham, other journalists named as members included Joel Miner, John Henry Brown, and Joseph Addison Clark.

Formal incorporation by the Republic, however, did not precede organization. Indeed, plans for forming such a society had accompanied the removal of the capital to Austin. The first number of the first newspaper in the town, the Austin City Gazette of October 30, 1839, had carried an announcement of a meeting on November 5 at the office of Burke and Company for the purpose of establishing the Austin Lyceum. Three months later, on February 14, 1840, the first formal meeting was held and E. L. Stickney was elected president.[15] A 22-page booklet containing the Lyceum's constitution and by-laws and a list of charter members was printed in the office of the City Gazette. The title page announced that the Austin Lyceum had been instituted February 12, 1840, and bore the society's motto, "Aut nunquam [sic] tentes, aut perfice," or "May you never try, or (else) accomplish."[16]

George Bonnell was not listed in the by-laws as a charter member, and minutes of the society show that he first was presented for an honorary membership at the meeting of March 5, 1840.[17] Plans for revision of the constitution, revealed at the March 19 meeting, however, called for an indefinite postponement of action on nominations of honorary members.[18] More than three months passed before Bonnell again was considered. On July 9, George K. Teulon nominated him for a regular membership, and the motion was seconded by L. F. Marguerat.[19] Journal minutes for Thursday, July 30, show, "The election of Mr. G. W. Bonnell was then gone into, which gentleman was unanimously elected an ordinary member."[20]

Bonnell was obligated to sign the constitution and to pay an initiation fee of three dollars in order ". . . to address the Lyceum, vote, or enjoy any privileges of a member. . . ."[21] In addition, he was required to pay a monthly subscription of one dollar ". . . for the support of the Lyceum, and a further subscription of one dollar and twenty-five cents per quarter" to support the society's library and museum.[22] Another requirement must have posed no problem for the Major: each new member was asked ". . . to donate at least one book to the library, or some curiosity or specimen connected with mineralogy, natural history, or other science, to the Museum, within three months after his admission. . . ."[23]

The Austin Lyceum was managed by a slate of six officers: president, vice-president, treasurer, recording secretary, and librarian, elected every

three months; and a corresponding secretary, who served a six-month term. No person under the age of 17 could become a member, and any member who defaulted on his dues for one month was stricken from the roll. A procedure also was provided for election of honorary members, whose privileges amounted to the right of lecture and debate.[24]

At a meeting on August 27, 1840, Bonnell was elected librarian[25] and served in that position until he was succeeded on February 17, 1841.[26] In this capacity, he was authorized . . .

> . . . to take charge of the Library and Museum; receive all books, curiosities, or specimens, belonging or donated . . . and enter the same in a book, which shall at all times be open to the inspection of any member; he shall receive all fines, fees, and subscriptions appertaining to the Library, and pay the same over to the Treasurer, taking his receipt therefor; he shall lay a detailed report of the state of the Library and Museum before the society on the first regular meeting in each month, showing the amount collected and expended on account of the Library, since the previous monthly report; the number of books, &c. donated to or purchased for the Library and Museum; the number of books loaned out, and the amount received for over time; and he shall, in said report, make such suggestions as may occur to him for any improvement in the government etc. of that portion of this institution over which he is appointed to superintend. . . .[27]

Despite such broad duties, society minutes indicate only one instance in which Bonnell delivered a librarian's report; on the evening of October 15, 1840, he

> . . . made a report which was adopted and he by resolution "requested to call on all members who have failed to comply with the 17th article of the Constitution and request of them to fulfill the same by making the required Donations and paying the amount of the arrearage of the respective subscription to the Library."[28]

Five days before, however, in an article in the Texas Sentinel, Bonnell expressed thanks to Teulon for the donation of a piece of petrified wood Teulon had found near Enchanted Rock and "a sea egg; found in the mountains above Austin. . . ." A Mr. Munson was acknowledged for his gift, ". . . some very beautiful specimins [sic] of stalactite of a very rare and singular variety," and Bonnell stated he hoped that other persons would deposit such articles in the museum. "Contributions from citizens and friends, will at all times be thankfully received."[29]

The Lyceum met, for the most part, each Thursday night, with 12 members constituting a quorum.[30] Unless otherwise ordered, meetings were called to order at 7:30 p. m., from March 1 until November 1, and at 7 p. m., from

November 1 through February.[31] The group accepted a motion by Teulon, however, on July 2, 1840, that the Lyceum would meet only on the second and last Thursday of each month.[32] The society voted September 26, 1840, to return to regular weekly meetings.[33]

The highlight of every meeting was a debate. The president was designated by the constitution to appoint a question committee of three at each regular meeting, and these men so appointed were bound to report at the next meeting at least three "debatable questions." One of the topics was selected for that evening's debate.[34]

> . . . After the selection of the question, it shall be the duty of the presiding officer to appoint two members to open the debate on said question, one of whom shall support the affirmative and the other the negative.
>
> THE DEBATE.
>
> ART. XXI. Each member may speak twice on the same subject, and may . . . support either side of the question; and the opener of the debate in the affirmative shall have the privilege of closing the same, but not until an opportunity shall have been afforded each member present to address the Society on the subject under discussion. No member shall be allowed to speak more than twenty minutes at any one time, without permission of the Society.
>
> After the discussion of a question it shall be decided on its merits, by a vote of the members present.[35]

The presiding officer was instructed to keep order during the debate, ". . . and if any member . . . shall use harsh or discourteous language, or be personal in his remarks, the presiding officer shall immediately call him to order; and any member refusing to sit down, or to obey when called to order, shall be liable to a fine, not exceeding five dollars."[36] A like fine was levied against any member who refused or failed ". . . to open a debate, or deliver a lecture or essay, when appointed for that purpose by the presiding officer. . . ."[37]

It is doubtful that George Bonnell ever was fined for non-participation in a debate or criticized for lack of interest in the society. Records show he debated on three occasions and served on a question committee once and on another committee once.[38] At the meeting of September 26, 1840, Bonnell was appointed a debator for the next meeting,[39] and on October 1, he opened with an affirmative argument on the question, "Can the Mind of Woman be as highly cultivated as that of Man."[40] M. P. Woodhouse and Ira Munson debated the negative side, and Bonnell was joined by Joseph Lee.[41]

On the same evening, Bonnell was appointed member of the question committee, and at a special meeting three days later, on October 4, he was named to a committee of three ". . . to procure the Senate Chamber or some room for the use of the Lyceum."[42] (Resolutions at various times thanking Vice-President David G. Burnet for the use of the Senate Chamber suggests that most meetings of the Lyceum were held in the capitol.)

Bonnell argued in the affirmative on October 15 that the Age of Napoleon was better adapted to universal empire than that of Alexander the Great.[43] Early the next spring, on March 4, 1841, he debated again the affirmative, as a partner of Teulon, for the question, "Would the Franco Texian Bill as Submitted to the Senate be beneficial to the Republic of Texas or not."[44] Following that debate, the Major was appointed to open arguments at the next meeting,[45] but minutes for March 18 reveal that Teulon served in Bonnell's place, ". . . the Gentleman apptd. to open the debate being absent. . . ."[46] Bonnell was in attendance at the next meeting, however, for the journal of March 25 indicates that he voted in the negative on the debate question, "Is a married life more conductive to happiness, than a life of single blessedness?"[47] (Bonnell, incidentally, never married.)

The constitution of the Lyceum provided, in addition to the debate, that a lecture or essay would be delivered at the second and last meeting of every month. The president was authorized to appoint a speaker, ". . . who shall have the privilege of selecting his own subject. . . ."[48] All society business was conducted privately, "except the reading of the journals, the delivery of orations, essays, and lectures, and the discussion of the question selected for the evening's debate."[49] In an effort to build up a respectable library . . .

> All Lectures, Essays, and Addresses, delivered in manuscript to this society, shall be considered as the property of the Lyceum, and as such be placed in charge of the Librarian, subject, at all times, to the disposition of the Lyceum.[50]

Political excitement in the Republic, however, would not allow permanence for the Austin Lyceum. Divided perhaps over controversy regarding the Franco-Texian Land Bill, then before the Fifth Congress, and the proposed Santa Fe Expedition, the Austin Lyceum on April 15, 1841, accepted a resolution by Teulon that the society be dissolved ". . . after the 21st of April next. . . ."[51] The president and secretary were instructed to surrender the charter to the Secretary of State for the Republic, and the librarian was directed to return all donations to the library and museum to the donors. A

book case and other property were sold at auction, and the money in the Lyceum treasury was given to the family of late County Judge J. W. Smith, who had been killed by Indians. "On motion the Lyceum adjourned Sine die."[52]

Twenty-five years later, Joel Miner, a member of the organization, offered eloquent praise in an article, "Early History of Austin," that appeared in The Southern Intelligencer on March 15, 1866:

> The Lyceum exercised a marked influence upon the manners and morals, and particularly upon the intellectual character of our citizens. Men of capacity and genius here met in conflict of wit, and the exercises were not only interesting but instructive, and all the citizens felt a warm and glowing interest in the success of the institution.[53]

Three weeks after the Lyceum was dissolved, Bonnell was present at a public meeting in Austin of "members of the Bar, Grand Jurors of the County of Travis and officiers of The District Court" and was appointed to a committee of seven authorized to express appreciation to R. E. B. Baylor, (who later founded Baylor University at Waco), for his services as judge of the third judicial district.[54] One month later, Bonnell was gone. He could not have known he would never see Austin again.

Westward to Santa Fe

Winds of adventure were blowing warm across the broad plains of the Republic in the spring of 1841, and George Bonnell, who had come to Texas to fight, would die fighting -- he who had entered the Republic seeking adventure would, from June, 1841, find nothing else -- no debates to enter, no parties to attend, no books to write -- for nineteen long months. He would join the Santa Fe Expedition, the Somervell Expedition, and the Mier Expedition; and shortly after Christmas, in 1842, shot by a disgruntled Mexican guard, he would fall, dying, into tall chaparral grass that lined the sandy banks of the Rio Grande, and his bones would be bleached by the next spring's hot sun.

The first public call for Texan army volunteers for the Santa Fe Expedition appeared in the Austin City Gazette on April 28, 1841; the notice was signed by William G. Cooke, but the call had been issued by order of Mirabeau B. Lamar, President of the Republic. The words of the printed plea made crystal-clear the objectives of the expedition: to raise a military force to guide and protect merchants and their goods through Indian territory in order to open trade with Santa Fe, and to extend Texas sovereignty to the Rio Grande.[55] The reasons underlying the need for such a venture, as invisioned

by Lamar, were as equally uncomplicated:

> By 1841, Texas was broke; her expenses for the year were $1,176,288; income was $442,604, mostly in her own low-value paper. . . .
>
> Business in Texas was at a standstill. . . . Lamar tried to get a loan from the United States, from England, or from France; he tried to establish a bank; he tried to sell land script. . . .[56]

Establishment of trade relations with Santa Fe and Chihuahua, then, might salvage Texas' disintegrating financial structure.[57] The hope of extending Texas' political control -- while not publicized -- was no secret.

> On the east side of the upper Rio Grande was the major part of the settlements that had long composed the Spanish province and later the Mexican territory of New Mexico. These communities came within the jurisdiction of Texas as defined so generously by the first congress; and Lamar proposed to occupy them. His resolution was strengthened by reports from that country that the hold of the Mexican government was weak and that the people desired a union with Texas.[58]

Journalist George Wilkins Kendall, founder and editor of the New Orleans Picayune and a guest of the expedition, certainly made no attempt to disguise the political motives of the venture. Even the San Augustine Red-Lander, in far East Texas, gave prominence to the newspaperman's observations:

> As editor of the Picayune, Mr. Kendall, who is with the Santa Fe Expedition, in writing to his paper, has let the cat out of the bag. He says the object of the expedition is to bring Santa Fe under the jurisdiction of Texas at once. Proclamations in Spanish have been printed at Austin, to be distributed in that town, offering them the protection of our government if they submit peacably [sic]. If not, the sword is to be resorted to, and we suppose the plunder of the town is to pay the expenses of this precious trip.[59]

Realization of the expedition, however, had been no easy task for Lamar. In his second annual message to Congress, delivered in November, 1839, the President had first submitted his tentative proposal for the expedition, but Congress balked and refused to sanction the plan. Attempts to win approval from the Fifth Congress failed even more miserably, due to overpowering opposition from Sam Houston's bloc in both the House and Senate, and the body adjourned in February, 1841, without underwriting Lamar's scheme.[60]

But the President had determined to act and though the Fifth Congress had done nothing legal about a Santa Fe Expedition, Lamar was confident that both houses approved the venture in principle.[61] On his own responsibility,

he proceeded to raise and equip the caravan. Cooke was ordered to have the call for volunteers printed in the City Gazette; Major George T. Howard was dispatched to New Orleans to buy supplies; Hugh McLeod, Texan army inspector general, was named commander;[62] and more than $89,000 was removed from the treasury.[63]

In Austin, then only two years old and boasting a population of not more than 1,500 souls, the Santa Fe Expedition gathered. George Bonnell, who had been a private in the Travis Guards,[64] was appointed a private May 21[65] in the artillery company of Captain William P. Lewis.[66] Bonnell's company numbered between 40 to 50 men and had a brass six-pounder pulled by a team of mules.[67] The expedition consisted of Bonnell's artillery company and five companies of infantry -- approximately 320 men and 23 ox-drawn wagons[68] carrying merchandise valued at close to $200,000.[69] After seven weeks of preparation[70] and with Lamar on hand to bid farewell,[71] the Santa Fe Expedition embarked from Kenney's Fort on Brushy Creek near Austin[72] on June 20, 1841.[73]

What kind of men comprised this venture of which George Bonnell was a member? One author has painted a graphic picture:

> They were Indian fighters and "amateurs," neurotics and "originals," men looking for adventure, men wanting to travel and see the country, men trying to cure an "inflammation of the lungs" on the great western prairies, men who hoped to make a profit on the goods they would sell in Santa Fe, men who looked to the glory and honor of the Texas Republic, and men who hoped to see strange sights and have unusual adventures and afterward write newspaper reports and books that would bring them fame and money.[74]

It is probable that Bonnell fell into the last category, for one contemporary diarist remarked that Bonnell "intends to write a lengthened report."[75] Unfortunately, little if nothing is known of Bonnell's activities on the expedition. Within reason, one may draw inference from the activities of Lewis' artillery company to chart Bonnell's part, since Bonnell was known to have been a member. Likewise, when the expedition split into two bands, the Sutton-Cooke party and the McLeod party, on August 30, 1841,[76] in present northwestern Motley County,[77] Bonnell must have remained with the artillery company, which was attached to the Sutton-Cooke group, the advance party of the two. This may be substantiated by the fact that months later, after the expedition had been captured and marched down into Mexico, Bonnell was in Mexico City by January 1, 1842:[78] the McLeod men did not reach the Mexican capital until

Adjutant Generals Office
Austin Nov: 27. 1851

I certify that the name of George W Bonnell appears as a private on the Muster Roll of Capt Lewis's Artillery Comp'y Santa Fe Pioneers and was enrolled on the 21st May 1841

Ben T. Hill
Adjt Genl

I do hereby certify that George W Bonnell was enrolled on the 21st May 1841 in Capt Lewis Company as a Private and was honorably discharged

A M McLeod
Late Brvt Brig Genl
Texas

February 1.[79] In such capacity, then, Bonnell enjoyed illustrious company: George Wilkins Kendall, Richard Fox Brenham, George Grover, Thomas Lubbock,[80] George Van Ness, Thomas Falconer, and Major George Howard, to list only several.

Having started from a point 20 miles north of Austin, the Santa Fe Pioneers journeyed roughly a thousand miles -- north to the Cross Timbers and west to Santa Fe. At least 30 participants were lost on the Texas prairies, and the entire expedition suffered attacks by Indian marauders, hunger, thirst, and diarrhea.[81]

The party reached the Brazos River by July 8, 1841, and made a crossing just below Bee Mountain. Entering the Western Cross Timbers in present Parker County on July 21, the Pioneers struck a northwestwardly course toward the present site of Wichita Falls. Mistaking the Wichita River for the Red River, the group proceeded along the valley of the Wichita on August 5.[82] Nine days later, the expedition was hopelessly lost, and on the morning of August 15, it was discovered that their Mexican guide and an Italian named Brignoli had deserted. Only then did they realize the error thay had made in following the Wichita; they were not, as they had imagined, only 65 miles from the New Mexican settlements.[83]

Having sent out a company to locate the Red River, the expedition rejoiced over the return of a guide August 20 who would lead them to the northwest. On August 22 the caravan had its first contact with hostile Indians,[84] and on the evening of August 30, the weary Pioneers camped on Quintufue Creek, some six miles from the foot of the Llano Estacado below the Caprock. At this site, Camp Resolution, a council divided the command.[85] William G. Cooke, one of the expedition's civil commissioners, and Captain John Sutton, who would command the military, were ordered to lead an advance party of approximately 100 mounted men to the northwest to seek out the New Mexican settlements and procure supplies. With the Sutton-Cooke party went Kendall, Grover, Brenham, Van Ness, and Captain Lewis' artillery company,[86] which included George Bonnell. Unable to locate a pass through which the wagons could cross the Caprock, General McLeod remained with the rest of the expedition at the foot of the Llano to await word from Sutton and Cooke.[87]

The advance party eventually came upon a group of Mexican traders on September 12, and a guide was dispatched to lead McLeod's waiting force on into the settlements. Expecting to be welcomed by the New Mexicans and certainly not anticipating armed resistance, the Sutton-Cooke party was met instead by military detachments sent out by Governor Manuel Armijo, who had previously

learned of the expedition. Bonnell's immediate commander, Captain Lewis, one of the first to reach the settlements, turned traitor and talked his associates into surrendering their arms on September 17. On October 5, the New Mexico officials again used Lewis to gain surrender of McLeod's main force, which had crossed the Llano and encamped at Laguna Colorado. The entire Santa Fe Expedition had passed into Mexican hands without firing a single shot.[88]

A letter, titled "Official Report," dated at Allende, State of Chihuahua, Mexico, November 9, 1841, (misdated 1842), and addressed from Brenham and Cooke to the Secretary of State of the Republic of Texas, is rich in detail concerning the activities of the expedition from the time the Mexican guide deserted on August 15: the division of command, the march of the Sutton-Cooke party, and the treachery of Lewis. Of the surrender of the advance party, the two men explained:

> . . . without provisions for our men, our horses broken down by long and weary marches, deprived of any hope of aid from our main body by a distance of two hundred miles, with an enemy before us with more than five times our numbers, and should we be victorious in the present fight of which we had no doubt, the prospect of being attacked by several thousand fresh troops in less than twenty four hours -- in this situation and considering that we were especially instructed to avoid hostilities, should the people themselves be opposed to us, we concluded the best and most prudent course we could adopt, was an acceptance of the terms proposed, and consequently we surrendered.[89]

Having so capitulated, matters only worsened for the Texians. Brenham and Cooke continued:

> We soon had to experience a new illustration of Mexican falsehood and treachery, for we had scarcely yielded our arms, when the conditions of our surrender were violated, and in fact not one single article of the capitulation was respected, except the sparing of our lives, and that only after a whole night's deliberation in council. . . . Our arms, horses, and private property were distributed among the Mexican soldiers, and instead of being permitted to return to Texas, we were hurried off on the 19th [of September], escorted by several hundred Mexicans and Indians, on the road to the city of Mexico. On the same day, the Governor departed at the head of his troops and accompanied by Lewis, for the purpose of attacking Gen. McLeod, or as we apprehended of practising upon him the same scheme of deception that had been so successful with us.[90]

"We are now on our way to the City of Mexico," Brenham and Cooke advised, "entirely uncertain as to the fate that awaits us." The two men concluded by saying that they had learned the day before, from a courier from Santa Fe,

that General McLeod and 182 men had surrendered to Armijo.[91]

Word of the catastrophe which had befallen the Santa Fe Expedition brought dismay to the hearts of Texans at home. Samuel Whiting, editor of the Austin Daily Bulletin, reacted typically on December 31, 1841:

> There seems to be, at last, no doubt of the unfortunate result. It seems that, famished and worn down, they surrendered themselves without firing a gun. They stated, themselves, that they had fought Indians all the way from here. . . . Our paper is going to press, and we must forego the expression of our feelings upon the matter for want of time. The gallant fellows, worn down by that most unrelenting of all despots -- hunger -- and obliged, powerless and unresisting, to surrender to such an enemy. It is too hard.

Greenberry Horras Harrison's Weekly Texian at Austin had carried confirmation of the fate of the expedition in the issue of December 15. Harrison's article, which had been clipped from the New Orleans Bulletin, which in turn had got the story from a Mexican publication at Vera Cruz, contained a rundown of provisions surrendered by the Texians: 12 wagons, five of which were filled with merchandise worth $25,000, and the remaining seven of which were loaded with provisions and ammunition; 200 firearms, a piece of cannon, 76 horses, and 70 oxen.

Not one Santa Fe Pioneer ever reached Santa Fe. Private Bonnell and his comrades in the Sutton-Cooke party were started down the trail -- a 2,000-mile jornada -- on foot from San Miguel, just southeast of Santa Fe, on September 20, 1841, and reached Mexico City on December 26.[92] The horrors of that trip were almost unbelievable:

> From San Miguel to the City of Mexico they went on foot, sometimes with lariats around their necks. The other ends of the cabristas were tied to the saddlehorns of Mexican soldiers. They marched through the desert in bitter cold, without shirts or even shoes. Most of their scanty clothing already had been traded for a hard ear of corn to eat or a few miles' ride on a mule when it seemed they could walk no farther. They staggered on with rifle muzzles in their faces, the lash at their backs. Sometimes they had a pint of corn meal a day for food -- and they used some of that to bake cakes in which they hid money and watches.[93]

Richard Fox Brenham summed up the harsh treatment when he wrote, "Prisoners in this country, as far as our observation has extended, depend entirely on the charity of the people for subsistence, as the Government makes no provision for their support."[94] Repercussions of outrage, then, were understandable:

> . . . the expedition might have been a minor incident, but

> unnecessary indignities and hardships, privations and cruel punishments, brutal killings and executions gave it a political significance that Mexico as a nation was powerless to combat. Not only did the Republic of Texas become inflamed, but serious repercussions were felt throughout the United States. Mass meetings were held in New Orleans and other cities demanding harsh retribution, for most of these "Texans" had friends and families back home in the United States.[95]

As previously indicated, an extant list prepared by George Grover shows Bonnell in Mexico City by January 1, 1842.[96] The next indication of Bonnell's whereabouts came in a list prepared February 28, 1842, by Mexican officials of 95 Sutton-Cooke men who had been locked up in Santiago Prison. Here, with Kendall and Grover, Bonnell would remain until he was released early that summer.[97]

Located in the northern part of the Mexican capital, on the great square of Tlaltelolco, Santiago Prison, Kendall wrote, was "in a better part of the city" about an hour's ride west from San Lazaro.[98]

> In one part of the prison was a walled enclosure where thousands of cholera victims had been buried in 1833, and Coombs says the effluvium was extremely offensive.[99]
>
> . . .
>
> The prisoners at Santiago were in chains and were made to work on the public roads. All prisoners were more or less confined with -- sometimes chained to -- hardened and depraved criminals. Beatings apparently were frequent. Food often was insufficient. Sometimes the men were packed into a room so tightly that there was no space to lie down to sleep, and they were forced to sit or stand all night.[100]

The prisoners, wearing at their ankles clattering log chains that reportedly weighed 20 pounds each, were forced to clean human offal from the streets.[101]

Despite such ominous conditions, the Santiago prisoners managed to celebrate San Jacinto Day on April 21. Permission for the ceremony was granted by prison officials after a committee of Spanish-speaking inmates had explained that the group wished to celebrate the day in honor of their patron saint. Having turned that deception, the prisoners leaped to the occasion to realize their plans. The morning road-work detail was sent out as usual -- with orders to purchase additional refreshments to supplement the six turkeys and the wines and liquors that had been sent by American friends in Mexico City.[102]

> All who could paint or draw cartoons feigned illness and remained in the prison that morning. When the guards left

> they unearthed paint and crayon and decorated the walls with Texas flags and scenes of sea and land battles -- with the Texans victorious over the Mexicans.
>
> Dinner was served at three o'clock; not such a dinner as the St. Charles or the Astor House might have served -- "but we had roast beef, turkey, and good appetites."[103]

Oratory and merriment followed the meal, and Richard Fox Brenham and George Bonnell were selected from among the prisoners to make addresses.[104] George W. Grover, who issued from the prison in April and May, 1842, a hand-written newspaper, The True Blue,[105] reported some of Bonnell's speech:

> We have assembled here under peculiar circumstances. It is perhaps the first time that a company of men ever met to celebrate a day sacred to liberty in prison and in chains. But though for the present deprived of our liberty, let us not repine. A tyrant may enchain our bodies, but our minds remain free. . . .[106]

A prior issue of The True Blue had outlined plans for the ceremony, "the first time that this great and glorious victory has been celebrated in this city." Music was provided by a bugler, a flute, and an organ. After Bonnell's address, ". . . toasts were offered and the song of Texas liberty was sung."[107]

> A survivor of San Jacinto, then living in Mexico, was invited to tell anecdotes of that famous battle. They sang all the Texas patriotic songs they knew and then turned to "Hail Columbia" and "The Star Spangled Banner." They took time out to drink to the memory of George Washington, with everyone standing uncovered. Wild snatches of song and uproarious merriment came from the room long after the prisoners had been locked in for the night.[108]

"As the hours sped along," Kendall wrote, "the prisoners, one by one, rolled themselves in their blankets upon the floor, and soon fell asleep."[109]

Bonnell's days in Santiago Prison already were numbered. Ministers of England, France, Prussia, and the Vatican were attempting to intervene on behalf of the Santa Fe prisoners, and between April 21 and April 28, 26 men were released "on various pretexts." Kendall was one of that group.[110] Finally, on June 13, 1842, Santa Anna issued orders for a general release. "It was not, as has been said, Santa Anna's birthday. Santa Anna's patron saint was St. Anthony, and the ostensible reason for the Texans' release was St. Anthony's day."[111] The next day, Bonnell and 118 Santiago prisoners were free.[112] Two months would pass, however, before Private Bonnell left Mexican soil; on July 27, the ship Rosa Alvina, on which Bonnell and 184 other Texians had embarked, was quarantined at Vera Cruz because yellow fever

had broken out on board.[113] Bonnell apparently was honorably discharged from Texas service on July 13, 1842, while at Vera Cruz; he had served as a member of the expedition for 13 months and 23 days.[114] At long last, on August 12, with the quarantine lifted, the Rosa Alvina left for Texas.[115] George W. Bonnell, who was going home at last, carried with him knowledge that he had been required to take an oath that on penalty of death he never again would take up arms against Mexico.[116] He arrived in the Republic late that month and was listed as a passenger on the steamer Mustang, which departed Galveston for Houston on August 28, 1842.[117]

South With Somervell

Political activities at home and foreign relations between Mexico and Texas had carefully set the stage for the second punitive expedition against the neighbor to the south. In November, 1841, General Sam Houston had succeeded Lamar to the presidency of the Republic, and in January, 1842, an embittered Sixth Congress passed a bill over Houston's veto extending the boundaries of Texas to include New Mexico, Chihuahua, Sonora, the Californias, and parts of several Mexican provinces.[118] After Congress adjourned on February 5, Senator Francis Moore had returned to Houston, where his Telegraph and Texas Register continued to plead for an offensive war against Mexico.[119]

Mexico, however, was not sleeping. Wishing not to allow his country's claim on Texas to expire by limitation, and with the Santa Fe Pioneers already imprisoned, President Santa Anna ordered an army into the rebellious Republic early in 1842.[120] On March 5, General Rafael Vasquez and 1,400 men appeared at San Antonio and the small group of Bexar settlers at once surrendered.[121] Additional Mexican detatchments harassed Goliad and Refugio, but retired in only a few days.[122] Learning of the Vasquez raid against San Antonio and acknowledging the threat to Austin, General Edward Burleson, Houston's vice-president, struck out for Bexar on the morning of March 13 with three companies of cavalry. Of this action, Houston's secretary, Washington D. Miller, wrote the President: "Burleson has declared unceasing strife until the achievement of a lasting peace; and is warm for the Rio Grande."[123] Burleson arrived only to find that the Mexicans had retreated. Houston, on the other hand, suspecting that Burleson's actions were motivated by political considerations, had ordered that General Alexander Somervell -- not Burleson -- was to assume command of the 3,500 volunteer militia who by that time had assembled in San Antonio. The men, however, warned that they

would not serve under Houston's appointee; but Burleson, not wanting to clash openly with the President, returned to Austin. As Vasquez's force marched farther to the south, the incident was allowed to disintegrate. Still hoping to avoid war, Houston moved to take no action on the Vasquez invasion, and the militia at Bexar simply dispersed on April 22.[124]

But the fuse had been lit. Sentiment for a war against Mexico was rampant when a special session of the Sixth Congress met in Houston on June 27, 1842. The legislators immediately passed a war bill authorizing Houston, as commander-in-chief, to draft one-third of the population able to bear arms and to sell ten million acres of land to finance the campaign. But Houston again hesitated and returned the bill with his veto. Suffering under the most vehement condemnation yet, Houston saw the special session adjourned on July 23, less than a month after it had met. To the war hawks, Houston had, by August, made only one token bow: on March 26 he had ordered a blockade of Mexican ports from the coast of Tabasco to Brazos Santiago -- but then he had seen that the Texas Navy was kept out of the area in order to avoid conflict. In August, with congress adjourned, the Republic was smouldering in "a state of fitful anxiety."[125]

The explosion came in early September. On July 7, small detachments under General Antonio Canales and James D. Davis had skirmished on the Nueces.[126] On September 11, General Adrian Woll, commanding almost 1,400 men, surprised and invaded San Antonio. Woll plundered the town for nine days, capturing the entire district court which had been sitting there, in addition to three congressmen, who were in Bexar to try important cases.[127] Hastily-organized Texian militia, led by Jack C. Hays and Matthew Caldwell, concentrated around the San Antonio area and attempted to give battle as best they could.[128] On September 18, 600 Texians lured Woll's army into a fight on the Salado, six miles out of the town. A dispute over command of the Texian militia permitted Woll time enough to escape without serious casulties. After his cavalry had cut off and massacred practically all of a regiment of Fayette County volunteers under Captain Nicholas Dawson, Woll began a retreat to the Rio Grande.[129]

Francis R. Lubbock, in Houston at the time of Woll's invasion, explained the President's reaction and the formation of the Somervell Expedition:

> The news of Woll's capture of San Antonio reached our city on the 16th of September, and the President immediately made a call for troops. In response, the Milam Guards and Mosely Baker's company, with Sherman's cavalry, volunteered,

> and set out in a few days for the seat of war. We arrived at Columbus in the latter part of the month and remained there in camp till turned back by orders of General Somervell as not being needed, for the reason perhaps that Woll had already retreated.
>
> We accordingly returned home, but Thomas S. Lubbock, commanding N. O. Smith's company, marched on to San Antonio. The President promptly appointed Gen. A. Somervell to command the forces in and around San Antonio. The general reached San Antonio about November 1st, finding nearly 1200 men on the ground. The soldiers preferred Burleson as a commander, and the greater part of Bennet's regiment from Montgomery returned home. The remnants of commands were consolidated into a regiment under Col. Jos. R. Cook, Lieut.-Col. Geo. T. Howard, and Maj. D. Murphree, and a batallion under Bennet. John Hemphill was the adjutant-general, and Col. Wm. G. Cooke the quartermaster.[130]

"After a long delay," Lubbock continued, "on November 29th -- two months after Woll's departure -- Somervell with about 750 men set out in pursuit."[131]

> Houston's order of October 3d to Somervell read thus: "You will proceed to the most eligible point on the southwestern frontier of Texas and concentrate with the men now under your command all troops who may submit to your order, and if you can advance with a prospect of success into the enemy's territory, you will do so forthwith. . . . You will receive no troops into your command but such as will march across the Rio Grande under your orders if required by you to do so. If you cross the Rio Grande, you must suffer no surprise."[132]

As has been shown, Bonnell had arrived in Houston about September 1. Although factual confirmation is not possible, Bonnell must have marched from Houston with the forces that departed that city September 16. Most likely, he rejoined his old comrades in the Milam Guards, a local militia company Bonnell had supported in 1838. Subsequently, when the Guards were ordered to return from Columbus to Houston in late September,[133] Bonnell proceeded on to San Antonio with N. O. Smith's company, which was commanded by Thomas Lubbock.[134] It is highly improbable that Bonnell, a man whose appetite for adventure apparently was insatiable, would have delayed in Houston and later hazarded such a journey as would have been required to meet Somervell on the Rio Grande. The opportunity of marching with friends to take up with the expedition in San Antonio, on the other hand, must have been an overwhelming impetus.

Bonnell's military rank as a member of the Somervell Expedition and later with the Mier Expedition, which is open to confusion, begs an explanation. Sam Houston apparently had appointed Bonnell a captain when Bonnell

entered Texas in August, 1836, and subsequently was enlisted briefly in Texas service.[135] Occasional newspaper references to Bonnell as colonel may have been caustic jibes at Bonnell's unsuccessful attempt in 1838 to be named by Houston as colonel to command forts designated to protect the Texas frontier.[136] Bonnell had served as a major while a member of the militia at Houston and commanded as such the force that had gone Indian hunting in the winter of 1838-39. He had been a private, however, in the Travis Guards, which organized in Austin in 1840; and he was a private in the artillery company of the Santa Fe Expedition. Major George Bernard Erath implies that at the outset of the Somervell Expedition, Bonnell may have been appointed a captain without command.[137] Both James L. Trueheart[138] and Thomas Green[139] have indicated that on December 20 Bonnell, by then on the Mier Expedition, was designated a first lieutenant of the Texas Navy.[140] No evidence substantiates Houston Wade's notation that Bonnell was a second lieutenant of the Mier Expedition.[141] Officially, Bonnell must have died a first lieutenant of the navy. Yet his original rank during the second service he performed for Texas continued to be applied, in all likelihood, as a term of endearment. In describing Bonnell's death, Thomas Green laments the fate of "Major Bonnell."[142] Only 40 pages earlier in his journal, Green had explained Bonnell's appointment as first lieutenant.[143] For John Henry Brown, too, Bonnell remained "Major Bonnell."[144]

Authorities disagree about the day on which the Somervell Expedition left San Antonio: Lubbock has claimed November 29;[145] other sources have indicated the march began as early as November 25[146] or November 22.[147] At any rate, the "South Western Army of Texas," (a name which James Decatur Cocke says was given the expedition "in general orders"), reached the Rio Grande in early December.[148] The march had been difficult and "considerable disaffection" had set in.[149] Arriving at the river with 683 men,[150] Somervell's initial action was to capture Laredo. Cocke's eye-witness account of that battle sheds light as well upon the under-current of disillusionment hovering over the troops:

> On or about the morning, at day-light of the 8th of Dec. the command under Gen. Somervell, surrounded and captured without firing a gun, the town of Laredo -- a town on the Eastern bank of the Rio Grande, and within the limits of the territory claimed by the Republic of Texas, but occupied by men who are the most bitter and troublesome enemies to the western frontier. . . . The town was placed at our disposal; but a small, a very small contribution, amounting to a bare subsistence for the troops,

> was exacted. We camped during the night within two miles of the town, where we were to receive the provisions on the on the [sic] morning of the next day -- a few of the men without the knowledge or sanction of the General or their company officers, visited the town, and to the disgrace of themselves and the expedition, plundered the citizens. . . . A feeling of dissatisfaction was produced among the whole, on account of the disgraceful conduct of a few. . . .[151]

After that incident, Somervell on the next day allowed all those who wanted to go home to do so, and approximately 200 men under command of Captains Jerome B. and E. S. C. Robertson departed.[152] It appears from Cocke's report that before the decision was made by the force which remained to cross the river and attack Guerrero, the entire army had started homeward:

> The commanding officers therefore determined upon a return to Texas. On encamping the first night, on the homeward march, it was ascertained by the officers (I mean the field officers) that a large majority of the men could not be marched eastward on a retreat, before having fronted "the military" of the country. A council of officers was called in the morning, when it was resolved, that if a large majority (say 500) were willing to cross the river and to continue hostilities, it should be undertaken. The General, in a short but pertinent address, proposed a division of the men upon the question of crossing the river at all hazards, or returning home. It was decided by an overwhelming majority that the river should be crossed. Accordingly, the line of march was taken up for Guerrero, by about 510 or 20 men -- the balance moved homeward.[153]

Thus momentarily committed, Somervell led his expedition downstream to the mouth of the Salado River across from Guerrero, crossed the river on December 15, and camped near the town. At this point, however, Somervell balked. Cocke elaborates and explains the results:

> . . . we crossed the river to attack. . . . When about sixty of the men had crossed, a force of some two or three hundred men, said to have been commanded by [Antonio] Canales, appeared in sight, as if coming to dispute the passage of the river; but a flag of defiance was raised, and they dared not advance to the combat. So we kept them off till the whole force had crossed the river with their horses. This was not effected till the next morning, when the Alcalde of Guerrero made his appearance and placed the town at the disposal of our commander, with the request that the troops should not be marched into the town. This request was complied with. The force was encamped within a mile of the town, and the next morning ordered to recross the river. This step, on the part of our commander, inspired some hope that we might have been prompted by fear in our movements; and the requisition, though very limited indeed in its value, was not wholly complied with. Murmuring among the men ensued at the supposed lack of energy in the officers. . . .

> To quiet this, a requisition of $5,000 was made upon the Alcalde. . . . This was merely held out, however, as a threat to force the Alcalde into a compliance with the requisition, since upon a failure . . . to comply, the troops were not permitted to cross the river and execute the threat . . . to ravage the town.[154]

Somervell, deciding to terminate the expedition, on December 19 ordered the army to march to Gonzales or be disbanded. Confusion broke out in the camp, and many threats were issued against Somervell's life.[155]

> In this resolution . . . he was still opposed by a majority of the force left -- those who had left their homes for the purpose of accomplishing something in the way of retaliation worthy to be reported, being still animated with the resolve never to turn their faces homeward until they had found and fought the soldiery of the country. About 300 men remained with the determination of attacking Mier -- a town on the river next in importance to Matamoras, and containing a population of between 5 and 6000 -- the remainder, amounting to about 200 or upwards having returned home with Gen. S[omervell].[156]

George Bonnell turned his face toward Mier and marched with the malcontents.

Tragedy at Mier

With General Somervell and approximately 200 of the troops gone by mid-day of December 19, the remainder of the detachment of the Texas Army, under command of its respective captains -- William S. Fisher, William Ryan, John G. W. Pierson, Ewen Cameron, and William M. Eastland -- marched south along the Rio Grande for four miles and encamped for the night.[157] Early the next morning, the men assembled to elect as their commanding officer Colonel Fisher.[158] As Fisher's second-in-command, Colonel Thomas J. Green was named to direct the local Texas Navy, or the "Texas Flotilla," as it was called -- four flatboats, or skiffs, captured at Guerrero.[159] As first lieutenant of the navy, the officers chose George Bonnell; Richard Fox Brenham was appointed surgeon.[160] That same day, December 20, the bulk of the force under Fisher pushed southeast for roughly 20 miles.[161] A party of 40 men, including Bonnell, went downstream in the boats -- the armada of the Texas Navy -- which had been captured several days prior. Under leadership of Green, this force was ordered to destroy or secure ". . . all canoes or boats of every description that might be anchored or secreeted [sic] on the Mexican side of the river."[162] Acting as a spy company, a small detachment of Texas Rangers under Ben McCulloch moved down the Mexican side of the river.[163] During the day, Fisher's force took as prisoners seven Carancuhua Indians, relieving them of ". . . all

the bows, arrows, and guns that could be found in their possession."[164] That evening, the separate detachments converged at a ranch on the river and encamped for the night.[165]

On December 21, the men put 20 more miles behind them. The next day . . .

> . . .the line of march of the army continued in the same direction for about 15 miles, where they encamped on the East [Texas] side of the river for the night and were joined in the evening by . . . Green and the boats.[166]

On that night of December 22, the Texians were less than seven miles from Mier.

Was George Bonnell party to a mutiny? Somervell had returned home, "Convinced that Houston had deliberately ordered his apointee to turn back once the Rio Grande had been reached and that the whole operation had resulted only from the President's need to make some sort of a concession to war sentiment. . . ."[167] Probably anticipating such accusations, James Decatur Cocke had countered with his moving defense of the Mier Expedition, no doubt speaking as well for Bonnell:

> If it is imputed to us as rashness in detaching ourselves from Gen. Somervell, and crossing the river with a small force, I answer for myself and comrades, that we were mainly prompted by disgust and mortification at the fact that the frontier of our country had been three times invaded, and our habitations as repeatedly desolated, and yet no blow of vengeance or retaliation had been struck by Texas. We crossed the river to stir up the whirlwind of war about the dwellings of the enemy, even if their houses should tumble on our devoted heads. If we are charged with acting in disobedience of the orders and wishes of the commander-in-chief, in not returning to Texas with him, I answer, that we were more afraid of being branded on our return as recreants, than we were of the worst possible results to be apprehended from such disobedience; and, moreover, we were not supplied with a sufficiency of provisions to take us home from Guerrero, and this fact operated upon many of the men who were willing, had the case been otherwise, to have returned. It was stamped at the time as officer-like conduct in Gen. S. to presume to march the command home without adequate supplies and horses -- many of the men being on foot and others with weak horses, utterly unable to perform the trip -- when, too, we were surrounded by an abundant commissariat department.
>
> I must conclude, and in doing so, I ask for my comrades -- not the sympathy of the world alone -- but more than that; I claim its highest admiration. . . . retaliation has been made with a vengeance. . . . the honor of leading the van in renewed achievements of heroism belongs to the band who fought

the stubborn fight at Mier. . . .

> The conscious satisfaction glowing in our own bosoms of having done what we conceived to be our duty -- and in doing that, in acting for the best interests and honors of the country we represented -- relieves, measurably, the miseries of our condition, and at once robs our imprisonment of all of its supposed degradation. The path is now open to all fearless Texians -- let them do their duty, and leave the consequences to God.[168]

Early on the morning of December 23, McCulloch led a small detachment of men across the river ". . . to ascertain the presence and numbers of the enemy, if any, in that vicinity."[169] Upon the return of the scouts, Fisher left a camp guard of 45 men[170] and led the remainder of his force into the public square of Mier. A guard was stationed around the entire town, ". . . for the purpose of preventing any regress or egress,"[171] but the villagers offered no opposition.[172] A requisition of supplies levied against the town, consisting of ". . . 25 sacks flour, 1250 lbs. coffee, 1250 lbs. sugar, and about 150 blankets, and 100 pair of shoes,"[173] was ready by late afternoon. Wishing not to have his men transport the supplies to camp on their backs, Fisher secured a promise of the Alcalde that the requisition would be delivered to the camp site by Mier townsfolk.[174] Then, taking the local priest and the Alcalde as hostages, Fisher marched the Texians back across the river.[175]

By late-morning on Christmas Eve, however, the provisions had not been delivered. The Alcalde explained to Fisher . . .

> . . . that they would be delivered at the nearest point of the river from the town, which was 6 miles below the encampment, and only two miles and a half from town, and that provided that he would march his army to that point he had little doubt but that all the articles would be there awaiting his arrival.[176]

But misfortunes were mounting. That same morning, A. S. Holderman, who had crossed the river looking for horses, was captured by a small contingent of Mexican cavalry. "His journal revealed to the Mexicans the size, character, and organization of the Texan force."[177] Word of what had happened to the supplies finally reached Fisher on Christmas Day. A company of spies under command of Captain John Baker was sent across the river to seek out the provisions while the main army and the boats proceeded downstream to that point designated by the Alcalde.[178] Before the men had marched five miles, the spy company returned with bad news that General Pedro Ampudia had entered Mier.

Furthermore, the men stated, ". . . there was a party of 200 or 300 Mexicans a mile or so down the river stationed for the purpose of firing upon the boats with artillery on their descent."[179] Upon hearing this, Green brought his boats to the east side of the river and awaited Fisher.[180] That evening, a council of officers voted to cross the river and capture the supplies -- even at the risk of battle. The 260 Texians could not have known that almost 3,000 Mexicans were waiting at Mier.[181]

History has been generous to George Bonnell on the last few days of his life. At least three separate accounts of the Battle of Mier tell a part -- or all -- of the story of Bonnell's actions on Christmas Day and the days following: the journal of Col. Thomas J. Green, a report by Memucan Hunt, and the memoirs of Maj. George Bernard Erath. Words of Green and Erath are firsthand; Hunt, who had retired to Texas with the remnants of the Somervell Expedition, apparently got his information from Texians who had escaped and made their way home after the battle and wrote his account early in January, 1843, only a few weeks later. The reports on Bonnell by Green and Erath are most significant when considered in the light of the fact that Green's story is told from the western side of the Rio Grande, while Erath's knowledge was gained as a member of the camp guard left on the Texas side. That is, Green's journal and Erath's memoirs -- with reference to Bonnell -- are not only coincidental, but also complementary. Hunt's report serves to confirm and expand that of Erath.

At sunset on Christmas Day, Colonel Fisher ordered approximately 260 Texians across the river on foot.[182] A camp guard of 42 men under Oliver Buckman remained to watch over the baggage and horses.[183] Hunt explained Green's orders to Bonnell:

> . . . Green detailed Messrs. Geo. W. Bonnell, Dr. R. Watson, and a Mr. Hackstaff for the purpose of reconnoitreing [sic] the river for two miles below, [in the direction of Mier] and securing or destroying all boats they might meet with on their way, after which they were ordered to join the army which was to march down the river for the purpose of encamping until the spies should return and bring correct information of the movements of the enemy.[184]

At least 10 mounted men had been sent in advance of Fisher's force -- the "spies" that Hunt mentions, ". . . a portion of whom were encountered by the scouts of the enemy, and two of our spies and four horses captured."[184] Hunt continued to detail Bonnell's activities:

> The above mentioned gentlemen proceeded down 1 or 2 miles but could hear nothing of the Texian army. It being after night and both dark and rainy, Mr. Bonnell went on shore [on the

> Mexican side] to listen, but all was calm and quiet. On his return to the boat, a party of horsemen started within 50 yards of him and ran in a direction from the river. Before he reached the boat several other horses commenced running not far distant from them. After they rode 2 or 300 yards they discharged their guns. Mr. Bonnell distinctly heard them talking to each other not far distant from him -- he returned to the boat and crossed to the eastern side of the river for the purpose of extinguishing the fire he had made in obedience to an order of . . . Green that they might cross again undiscovered and endeavor to join the army previous to or at the time it reached its place of destination.[186]

Green's journal confirms that Green intended Bonnell, Watson, and Hackstaff to participate in the battle:

> We expected to have warm work with Ampudia, and ordered these gentlemen to float the canoe down opposite the battle-ground, hitch it to a bush, come up, take a hand. . . .[187]

But the fire, which Hunt incidentally mentions as a blaze which Bonnell recrossed the river to put out, would prevent the three men from joining in the battle. For Colonel Green had told Bonnell to build a fire in order to cook dinner, ". . . which consisted of a fat sheep, with a stick run through it, the ends of which rested upon the sides of a large canoe, with the fire in its bottom."[188] Green's journal indicates that the colonel later believed that Bonnell and the other two men returned to the original camp, ". . . having no alternative," because Green and his men were required suddenly to strike after the enemy away from the river.[189] Hunt reveals, however, commenting unknowingly on what were the results of Green's cook fire, exactly why Bonnell, Watson, and Hackstaff were unable to join the battle:

> After examining the boat they discovered that it was burnt through in several places and had commenced leaking to such an extent that they did not deem it safe again to re-cross the river in it. They consequently destroyed it and were left without any means of crossing, and were compelled to remain on the Eastern shore during the night.[190]

Hunt relates that Bonnell then ". . . heard the reports of the Mexican artillery and small arms as well as plainly seeing the light produced from the explosion of the powder."[191] Several miles away, fighting had broken out at Mier; the battle would last well into the next day. James Decatur Cocke furnished a graphic, eye-witness account:

> We reached the suburbs of the town in the night, about 8 o'clock, and were hailed and fired upon by the picquets [sic] of the enemy. We moved slowly and steadily forward, driving in their outposts, one after another; crossed the river Alcantro, which is within the limits of the corporation and

> near the public square, under a heavy fire of musketry, and took a position within gun shot of the artillery and lines of the enemy. We had to force the entry through the walls of the houses to get this position. On firing by companies up a street which led to the public square, the artillery of the enemy was opened upon us, and the big guns and musketry of the enemy were actively employed against us harmlessly, however, at night.[192]

In describing how he had come to depart from Bonnell at the river, Green's comment suggests that the Mexicans anticipated the chance to trap the Texians in the town: ". . . when we arrived in sight of the Mexican army, they retreated to the city at right angles from the river, leaving my friends and dinner behind. . . ."[193] Cocke described the battle on the morning of December 26:

> At daylight we opened upon them with the never-failing rifles of Texians and soon cleared and silenced the Artillery -- killing, as has been reported, two entire companies of artillery, with the exception of one captain and one private. Another piece of artillery was placed so as to rake our position from another direction, (manned by infantry) which also was soon cleared. The house tops surrounding us in three directions were covered with sharp-shooters, protected by a stone wall of some 24 inches in depth. The fatality of our rifles soon thinned the number of those. And toward the afternoon, charges of the enemy were repeatedly sounded.[194]

The battle was not favoring the invaders, however, as much as Cocke claimed. Although the Texians, outnumbered 10 to one, had killed almost 600 Mexicans and wounded at least 200 more and sustained only 37 killed and wounded, they "... were hungry and thirsty, their powder was almost exhausted, and their discipline had begun to crack."[195] At noon, General Ampudia acted to end the battle:

> . . . the Mexican commander conveyed a message under a white flag stating that he was about to be heavily reinforced and that in order to spare further loss of life on both sides the Texans should capitulate. Actually, at first sight of the white flag, the majority of the Texans felt that the Mexicans wished to surrender. Upon learning that their own leader was considering giving up, the men wanted to continue fighting, but in reality there was no course open to them other than honorable surrender. A written promise was granted that they would be humanely treated and soon exchanged, and upon this guarantee the surrender was accomplished.[196]

Early on that morning, Bonnell, Watson, and Hackstaff had arisen from their position on the river where they had been forced to destroy the boat and had marched upstream a distance of three miles to the camp site. The Texian camp guard as yet knew nothing about the outcome of the battle. Arriving in camp,

Bonnell was met by a Mexican by the name of Vasquez, apparently in the service of the Texians or a deserter, who could offer only scant information:

> . . . that he accompanied the army to the town of Mier and waited until they had succeeded in securing in the houses of the citizens, and in a great measure protected from the enemy, which in a few minutes after marched up with their artillery and cavalry and surrounded the town entirely. The firing was then commenced by the enemy's cannon and small arms, and was replied to in turn by a sharp crack of the Texian rifles, Vasquez stated their numbers as being very large -- he thought not less than two or three thousand, and in consequence of his speaking the Mexican language was enabled to make safe his escape previous to the engagement with the enemy.[197]

All day on December 26, the Texian camp guard waited in vain for information. Anxiety was mounting as evening approached. Buckman, a lieutenant serving as captain of the guard, urged Major George Bernard Erath to take command, but Erath at first refused, ". . . as the guard was a mixture from companies of men from all over the Republic and unknown to me."[198] Erath's advice was that the men should remain in camp until nightfall, then retreat several miles and return in the morning. But Bonnell did not share Erath's sentiments:

> They would perhaps have followed this advice, but Captain Bonnell, who had been more or less in Texas service but who at this time had no command, was one of those who could not believe that disaster really might overtake Texans; he declared that he thought there could be no dainger [sic] in remaining, that our men were not whipped but only delayed by some accident.[199]

"However," Erath admitted, "all except Bonnell and four or five with him prepared to leave at a moment's notice."[200] Word of the surrender finally reached the Texian camp. Erath recalled the events leading up to the discovery of the fate of the battle:

> The rain had ceased and, although it was a cloudy night, the moon gave a little light. Some time after dark we distinctly heard the words "Bring over the boat, bring over the boat!" coming from over the river. Buckman and several of us ran down to the river, but no reply came to our challenge. Some said we had imagined the call. Bonnell declared he had been listening intently and had not heard it. Just then the words came again and Bonnell did hear. But still we could get no other words to our questioning. Bonnell returned to his belief that we had heard nothing. Buckman said he had heard enough, and thought it time to leave camp.[201]

Without further delay, Buckman deserted camp, leading approximately 20 of the men, each of whom took at least one extra horse. Within minutes, Erath, too, left with 13 more Texians.[202] Hunt has revealed that with the departure of

Buckman and Erath, only eight men were left in camp: "Messrs. Hendsley, Holden, Thomas, Smith and Hide of the guards, and Messrs. Hackstaff, Bonnell and Watson of the boat. . . ."[203] Later, Erath confirms Hunt's statement that the persons who had cried from the west side of the river for the Texians to bring over a boat turned out to be Caleb St. Clair and Whitfield Chalk,[204] who had ". . . concealed themselves until night, passed the guard, and got safe into our camp across the river."[205] Having been ferried across the river, St. Clair and Chalk soon caught up with Erath. A man named Pierce and a companion, who with Erath's permission had ridden back to camp to check for survivors, arrived minutes later:

> They reported that they had found the camp deserted by all except Bonnell and Hicks, who were at the river bank talking to Mexicans on the other side; the Mexicans had with them one of our men, a prisoner, to explain the situation.[206]

Hunt's report furnishes confirmation of that incident:

> . . . when they had concluded to abandon the encampments unanimously, and had mounted their horses for their own safety and retreat, a prisoner made his appearance on the opposite side of the river, guarded and escorted by Mexican soldiers, he called to Mr. Bonnell, stating that they were all prisoners -- that further conversation passed between them, Dr. Watson is unable to state. . . .[207]

Colonel Thomas Green, Bonnell's immediate commander and by then a prisoner at Mier, has preserved the gist of the conversation that passed between Bonnell and the "prisoner . . . on the opposite side of the river."[208] Green explains:

> The evening after the battle, General Ampudia informed Colonel Fisher and myself that he would send his cavalry out to our camp upon the east side of the Rio Grande to bring in the balance of our men, horses, camp furniture, &c.; and, to prevent the further effusion of blood, he would advise us to write to the men in camp to surrender and come in. We replied that we were <u>prisoners</u>, and they were <u>free</u>; we could not, therefore, undertake to give such advice. I requested permission of the general for one of our men to accompany the cavalry, and to secure my baggage, the most important part of which was my journal, and manuscript maps of the roads, rivers, and the parts of the country through which we had travelled. Having obtained the permission asked for, I sent Sailing-master Lyon, with a <u>knowing</u> wink, to our boys in camp. The cavalry approached the river to within a few hundred yards, halted, and sent Lyon and a few men to "<u>Halloo across, and order our men to bring over the boats!</u>" Lyon being an indifferent Spanish, and the Mexicans with him worse English scholars, anglicized the above order thus: "<u>Boys, we are all prisoners, and several hundred cavalry are close by in pursuit of you. Take all the good horses and put!</u>"[209]

Upon hearing this, Bonnell and Hicks returned to camp and prepared to leave.

The time element of these events presents a confusing problem that must be dealt with separately. In the first place, Green's journal apparently contradicts Erath and Hunt in that Green suggests that his messenger, Lyon, went directly to the river and spoke with Bonnell on ". . . the evening after the battle," which would have been December 26.[210] Green's sequence of events further implies that Bonnell was captured and killed on that same night.[211] Both Erath and Hunt, however, assert that Bonnell was still in camp and very much alive on the morning of December 27. Hunt specifically states that the incident concerning the prisoner who spoke with Bonnell across the river did not occur at night on December 26, but on the next morning: "Mr. Bonnell distinctly heard the reveille of the Mexican band on the morning of the 27th, at about sunrise. . . ."[212] At this point, Hunt states, "at about nine o'clock," Bonnell was summoned to the river to talk with Lyon.[213] Erath's memoirs support Hunt: Erath recalls that St. Clair and Chalk, when they reached Erath's party, were accompanied by the remaining men who had stayed temporarily with Bonnell and Hicks; that St. Clair and Chalk did <u>not</u> get across the river on the night of December 26:

> They finally reached our camp at daylight. The men took a boat over to them, and then all the men in camp, except Bonnell and Hicks left. . . .[214]

St. Clair and Chalk then reached Erath at about 9 a. m. December 27. Pierce and his companion, who arrived just after St. Clair and Chalk and who also brought word of Bonnell's talk with the prisoner, had been dispatched by Erath shortly after sunrise on that same morning[215] and, consequently, could not have reported the incident regarding Bonnell had it occurred on the evening of December 26. Erath's description of the flight of Bonnell and Hicks and the death of Bonnell reveals, furthermore, that the two men were not captured until December 28:

> We learned later that Bonnell and Hicks, after talking with the Mexicans across the river, [December 27] returned to camp and also started off with two horses apiece, but missed our trail, got lost in a chaparral thicket, remained lost till late the next day, [December 28] and then struck our trail again. In the meantime the Mexicans must have passed beyond them in pursuit; for a hundred men had been crossed over to our camp in our boats. These men mounted our remaining horses and set out in pursuit of Bonnell, Hicks, and the rest of us. They must have been nearly up with us the first night [December 27] after we all got together and went on; but they turned back, found Bonnell and Hicks, who had at last struck our trail,

> behind them. They carried the two men back and, while busy plundering our camp, sent Bonnell under guard into a boat. Hicks was told to push the boat from shore and to jump in. He obeyed, pushing the boat from shore, but jumped in the other direction and made for the bank of the river. Guns were fired after him but he escaped, and he, without so much as a pocketknife for a weapon, walked all the way to Victoria. . . .[216]

"It is supposed the Mexican guard," Erath concludes, "exasperated at Hick's escape, shot Bonnell in cold blood, as that was the last heard of him."[217] Green apparently was led to believe that Hicks and Bonnell were captured as they returned to camp for more horses.[218] It is probable that Bonnell and Hicks chose to remain in camp alone as long as they did in order to be able to help any Texians who might escape from Mier and make their way back to camp. John Henry Brown clearly substantiates this and sheds more light on the particulars. Brown states that Bonnell, ". . . with a Mr. Hicks, was the last to seek safety in flight, waiting till the last moment to assist across the river any who might have escaped."[219]

> They left only on the appearance of Mexican cavalry on the opposite side; but were captured ten miles out and carried back. Reaching the camp at twilight, Hicks escaped into the chapparel [sic], and finally reached home and made this statement to the writer of this. That was the last ever heard of Major Bonnell, who was doubtless killed on the escape of Hicks.[220]

Brown, too, appears unable to tie down the exact time of the events he describes. But according to Erath, Bonnell and Hicks must have finally left camp on the morning of December 27. The day of the "twilight," that Brown mentions as the time Bonnell and Hicks were brought back to camp, must have been December 28, the next day. The Texians who were taken prisoner at Mier and subsequently held in Mexico apparently had no word of the fate of Bonnell for almost a year. James L. Trueheart, an inmate at Perote Prison, noted in his diary on Tuesday, December 19, 1843:

> We are also informed that Bornell [sic] was killed on the Rio Grande and did not escape with the camp guards as the Mier prisoners were led to believe.[221]

Epilogue

The untimely death of George Bonnell was not taken lightly by his close friends. Thomas Green, in his Journal of the Texian Expedition Against Mier, interrupted his narrative to offer a moving eulogy:

> Major Bonnel [sic], than whom Texas did not possess a

> purer patriot or braver man . . . was not only constitutionally brave, but, being a Santa Fe prisoner, he was doubtless stimulated to a more obstinate resistance, which could neither prevail over numbers, nor was calculated to inspire their savage beasts with magnanimity for such heroism. Thus fell a brave man and a pure patriot, without the last sad rites of burial. His bones now lie bleaching upon the banks of the Rio del Norte. His spirit, if congenial spirits meet in heaven, will hold glorious communion with those of Milam and Travis, of Fannin, Grant, and Ward, of Bowie, Crocket [sic], Brennem [sic], Fitzgerald, and a host of other heroes who fell in the same struggle for liberty.[222]

Yet, it would be a lady, Julia Lee Sinks, who had known Bonnell in Austin in 1840 and had heard the Major talk of Texas who would -- more than 30 years after his death -- leave perhaps the most memorable living tribute:

> There was almost a waggish love of exciting curiosity, a twinkling eagerness in his eyes to see a wide-open attention in the eyes of others when he gave some description of the wonderland of Texas, the then "terra incognita" to all except a favored few. "Canon de Uvalde" was his "Happy Valley," and what was more, it had within its walled-in sides the "Fountain of Perpetual Youth" that Ponce de Leon had sought for in vain among the umbrageous glades of Florida. San Saba, with its fabled mines, was his Eldorado; the "Enchanted Rock" on the upper Colorado was the "Mountain of Light" to his legends. . . . His own special mountain of light was so brilliant in its corruscations that campers at its base needed neither moon nor stars. And then he would tell of acres of petrified forest that stood in gloomy grandeur, without leaf or bud, like Nemesis, stony and solemn. These marvels seldom came into his paper, but he told them with such grave assurance to persons who . . . "were green from the states," that he excited a certain vague faith for the time.[223]

For eight years no attempts were made to settle Bonnell's estate. Finally, however, on February 21, 1851, William R. Baker, clerk for Harris County, certified Bonnell's old friend and newspaper partner, Jacob W. Cruger, as administrator ". . . on the estate of George W. Bonnell, deceased, with full powers as such, by the Chief Justice of Harris County court; that said Cruger has qualified as the law requires. . . ."[224] Cruger in turn gave Jacob de Cordova power of attorney on April 23, ". . . to ask, demand and receive from the proper offices of the Government of Texas, all certificates for pay and land due this said Bonnell, for services rendered the Government of whatever nature."[225] A statement that had been secured January 27, 1851, from Ben F. Hill, adjutant general, and Hugh McLeod, verifying that Bonnell had been a member of the Santa Fe Pioneers,[226] was used to obtain a receipt from

Late Republic

To Geo W. Bonnell Dr.

To Services on the Santa Fe Expedition
from 21st May 1841 to 13 July 1842.
13 Mos & 23 days @ 22½ — $309.75
Honors — 05 —
$314.75

2 Vols.
Geo W. Bonnell
Survey of Lands
on Santa Fe Expedition
Certificate contained
Four Hundred
Seventy four 75/100
$374.75
May 1851
Gen Land Office

Receipt for Services on Santa Fe Expedition, 1851
(Designated for Estate of George Bonnell)

state auditor John Swisher in May for $374.75 due Bonnell's estate for his services on the expedition. The certificate represented payment of $22.50 per month for service of 13 months and 22 days, or $309.75, and an additional $65, apparently for expenses.[227] Records indicate no other payments were ordered for Bonnell's estate, nor do the papers show in what manner the estate was settled. Bonnell apparently had died intestate and left no kindred in Texas.

Somewhere along the way, George Bonnell let Texas get into his blood -- a fact that cost him his life. He could not have known when he left Mississippi in 1836 that he was making his last migration, yet he must have realized the dangers in participating in expeditions against a hostile nation and the chances that he might not survive. He was a wandering, restless, adventuresome journalist, and it is difficult to predict whether he would have lingered much longer in the Republic had he lived. He might have stayed to see statehood and might have marched in the Mexican War, but the opening of the Far West, the California Gold Rush, campaigns with the Sioux on the Great Plains -- any event that promised excitement and new experiences on new frontiers -- might have lured him away overnight. Yet, he worked and lived and served his adopted Republic, albeit unsuspectingly, for the last six years of his life. Coming on his own to help in the war for independence, he served in the Texas army on several occasions -- protected Nacogdoches, commanded a brigade against Indians, joined three expeditions against Mexico -- and was one of the first settlers in Houston and, later, Austin. He was closely associated with Sam Houston and Mirabeau B. Lamar, presidents of the Republic, and was commissioner of Indian affairs under the former. Although he often dipped into events of Congress, he looked forward as early as 1838 to a newspaper career in Texas and may have been influential in the publication of Houston's Courier and Enquirer and National Banner, issued that year. At Austin, he edited and later published the new capital's second newspaper, the Texas Sentinel, for 11 months in 1840. He dabbled in business ventures. He was a charter member of literary, scientific, philanthropic, and military societies in the Republic, and he wrote a comprehensive emigrant's guide to Texas, today acclaimed as one of the most valuable such source books. In retrospect, Texas perhaps could not have boasted a more dedicated son.

Footnotes

[1]Texas Sentinel (Austin), Aug. 1, 1840.

[2]Discussed in detail in chapter 2.

[3]H. P. N. Gammel, (ed.), The Laws of Texas 1822-1897, Vol. II: Laws of Texas 1839-1846 (Austin: Gammel Book Company, 1898), p. 78.

[4]James M. Day, "Introduction," in Arthur Ikin, Texas: Its History, Topography, Agriculture, Commerce, and General Statistics (reprint; Waco: Texian Press, 1964; first published in 1841: London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper), p. [iii].

[5]Gammel, p. 79.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Day, pp. [iii-iv].

[13]Constitution and By-Laws of the Austin Lyceum (photocopy; Austin: Austin City Gazette Office, 1840), p. iii. Cited hereafter as Austin Lyceum.

[14]Gammel, pp. 149-150; and Texas Sentinel, May 20, 1840.

[15]Louise Jarrell, "The Austin Lyceum, 1839-1841" (unpublished Master's thesis, Dept. of History, The University of Texas, 1941), pp. 144-145. This is a most comprehensive account of the society: the author has transcribed, as a part of the appendix, the handwritten minutes of all meetings, contained in mss. journals in the Texas State Archives and Library, Austin, from Feb. 14, 1840, through April 15, 1841.

[16]Austin Lyceum, p. i; translated by Nancy Wallace and Margaret Welch; two more literal renditions include, "Either you should never attempt, or you should finish completely," and "You should begin nothing you cannot finish."

[17]Jarrell, p. 160.

[18]Ibid., p. 165.

[19]Ibid., p. 190.

[20]Ibid., p. 191.

[21]Austin Lyceum, p. 10.

[22]Ibid., p. 11.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid., p. 10-11.

[25]Jarrell, p. 194.

[26]Ibid., p. 206.

[27]Austin Lyceum, pp. 8-9.

[28]Jarrell, p. 203.

[29]Texas Sentinel, Oct. 10, 1840.

[30]Austin Lyceum, p. 13.

[31]Ibid., p. 19.

[32]Jarrell, pp. 187-188.

[33]Ibid., p. 197.

[34]Austin Lyceum, p. 12.

[35]Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[36]Ibid., p. 17.

[37]Ibid., p. 18.

[38]Jarrell, p. 88.

[39]Ibid., p. 196.

[40]Ibid., pp. 198-199.

[41]Ibid., p. 196.

[42]Ibid., pp. 199-200.

[43]Ibid., p. 202.

[44]Ibid., p. 208.

[45]Ibid., p. 209.

[46]Ibid., pp. 209-210.

[47]Ibid., p. 212.

[48]Austin Lyceum, p. 13.

[49]Ibid., p. 14.

[50]Ibid., p. 20.

[51]Jarrell, pp. 213-214.

[52]Ibid., p. 214.

[53]Quoted in Jarrell, p. 138.

[54]Texas Sentinel, May 20, 1840.

[55]Noel M. Loomis, The Texan-Santa Fe Pioneers (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), pp. 3-4.

[56]Ibid., p. 6.

[57]Ibid., p. 7.

[58]Rupert Norval Richardson, Texas: The Lone Star State (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1943), p. 158.

[59]Red-Lander (San Augustine), Sept. 8, 1841.

[60]Stanley Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, 1836-1845 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1956), pp. 165-166.

[61]Loomis, p. 9.

[62]Ibid., p. 10.

[63]Siegel, p. 166.

[64]Discussed in detail in chapter 2.

[65]George W. Bonnell, "Public Debt Papers (Claims Against the Republic settled after 1845) Origin of file: Treasury Department," Folder, Texas State Archives and Library, Austin, includes verification obtained in 1851 from Ben F. Hill and Hugh McLeod that Bonnell was a private enrolled in Lewis' artillery company on May 21. Cited hereafter as Bonnell "Public Debt Papers."

[66]Loomis, pp. 15, 206; also, Bonnell was noted as an artillery private in a list of Santa Fe Expedition participants published in the Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston), Feb. 26, 1842.

[67]Loomis, p. 15.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Walter Prescott Webb, et al. (eds.), The Handbook of Texas (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1952), II, p. 729.

[70]Loomis, p. 16.

[71]Richardson, p. 158.

[72]Webb, p. 729.

[73]Loomis, p. 18.

[74]Ibid., p. xiv.

[75]Ibid., p. 286.

[76]Ibid., pp. 65-66.

[77]Webb, p. 729.

[78]Loomis, p. 207.

[79]Ibid., p. xiii.

[80]Colorado Gazette and Advertiser (Matagorda) of June 4, 1842, published an account of the expedition written by Thomas Lubbock.

[81]Loomis, p. x.

[82]Webb, p. 729.

[83]Loomis, p. 57.

[84]Ibid., p. 61.

[85]Ibid., p. 66.

[86]Ibid.

[87]Webb, p. 729.

[88]Ibid.

[89]Red-Lander, July 7, 1842.

[90]Ibid.

[91]Ibid.

[92]Loomis, pp. x-xiii.

[93]Ibid., p. xi.

[94]Red-Lander, July 7, 1842.

[95]Loomis, p. xii.

[96]Ibid., pp. 207, 256.

[97]Ibid., pp. 207, 257.

[98]Ibid., p. 274.

[99]Ibid.

[100]Ibid., p. 131.

[101]Ibid., pp. x, 178.

[102]Fayette Copeland, Kendall of the Picayune (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1943), p. 106.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Ibid., p. 107.

[105]C. Richard King, "Prison Camp Papers of 19th Century Texas," in Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Summer, 1961), p. 342.

[106]Ibid., p. 345.

[107]Ibid.

[108]Copeland, p. 107.

[109]Ibid.

[110]Loomis, p. 131.

[111]Ibid.

[112]Ibid., pp. 132, 207.

[113]Ibid., p. 275.

[114]Verification that Bonnell was honorably discharged after having served from May 21, 1841, to July 13, 1842, is found in official papers, 1851, in Bonnell "Public Debt Papers."

[115]Loomis, p. 275.

[116]Ibid., pp. 186-187.

[117]Telegraph and Texas Register, Aug. 31, 1842.

[118]Siegel, p. 191.

[119]Ibid., p. 192.

[120]Richardson, p. 162.

[121]Siegel, p. 192.

[122]Ibid., pp. 192-193.

[123]Ibid., p. 193.

[124]Ibid., pp. 193-194.

[125]Ibid., pp. 196-202; also, Mary Starr Barkley, History of Travis County and Austin, 1839-1899 (Waco: Texian Press, 1963), p. 62, states that this session of the Sixth Congress received word of the death of Bonnell -- an interesting incident, since Bonnell was not killed until December, 1842.

[126]Loomis, p. 182.

[127]Siegel, p. 203.

[128]Ibid.

[129]Ibid., pp. 203-205.

[130]Francis R. Lubbock, Six Decades in Texas, ed. C. W. Raines (Austin: Ben C. Jones & Co., 1900), p. 146.

[131]Ibid.

[132]Ibid.

[133]Ibid., p. 90.

[134]Ibid., p. 146.

[135]Indicated in Memorial of G. W. Bonnell, Petitioner, Relief for Services Rendered, Nov. 14, 1837, at Texas State Archives and Library, Austin. (Handwritten.)

[136]Discussed in Daily Times (Houston), April 30, 1840, and chapter 1 of this thesis.

[137]Lucy B. Erath, (ed.), "Memoirs of Major George Bernard Erath," in The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXVII, (1923-24), p. 46.

[138]Frederick C. Chabot, (ed.), The Perote Prisoners, Being the Diary of James L. Trueheart. (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1934), pp. 68-69.

[139]Thomas Jefferson Green, Journal of the Texian Expedition Against Mier (Austin: The Steck Company, 1935), pp. 70-71.

[140]Chabot, pp. 68-69.

[141]Houston Wade, Notes and Fragments of the Mier Expedition (La Grange, Texas: La Grange Journal, 1936), p. 121.

[142]Green, p. 114.

[143]Ibid., pp. 70-71.

[144]John Henry Brown and William S. Speer, The Encyclopedia of the New West (Marshall, Texas: The United States Bibliographical Publishing Company, 1881), p. 574.

[145]Lubbock, p. 146.

[146]Webb, p. 637.

[147]James David Carter, Masonry in Texas: Background, History, and Influence to 1846 (Waco: Committee on Masonic Education and Service for The Grand Lodge of Texas A. F. and A. M., 1955), p. 326; and Siegel, p. 206.

[148]James Decatur Cocke, "The Texian Expedition Under Col. Wm. S. Fisher--The Battle of Mier," in Texas Times (Galveston), March 4, 1843, p. 2, and Telegraph and Texas Register, March 8, 1843, p. 1. Cited hereafter as Cocke letter.

[149]Carter, p. 326.

[150]Webb, p. 637.

[151]Cocke letter.

[152]Lubbock, p. 147.

[153]Cocke letter.

[154]Ibid.

[155]Siegel, p. 206.

[156]Cocke letter.

[157]Memucan Hunt, letter to the editor, Telegraph and Texas Register, Jan. 18, 1843. Cited hereafter as Hunt letter.

[158]Ibid.

[159]Cocke letter; Webb, p. 189; Green, p. 71.

[160]Chabot, pp. 68-69.

[161]Cocke letter.

[162]Hunt letter.

[163]Webb, p. 189.

[164]Hunt letter.

[165]Ibid.

[166]Ibid.

[167]Siegel, p. 206.

[168]Cocke letter.

[169]Lubbock, p. 147.

[170]Webb, p. 189.

[171]Hunt letter.

[172]Webb, p. 189.

[173]Hunt letter.

[174]Webb, p. 189.

[175]Siegel, p. 207.

[176]Hunt letter.

[177]Webb, p. 189.

[178]Cocke letter.

[179]Hunt letter.

[180]Ibid.

[181]Cocke letter.

[182]Hunt letter.

[183]Webb, p. 189.

[184]Hunt letter.

[185]Cocke letter.

[186]Hunt letter.

[187]Green, pp. 114-115.

[188]Ibid., p. 114.

[189]Ibid., p. 115.

[190]Hunt letter.

[191]Ibid.

[192]Cocke letter.

[193]Green, p. 115.

[194]Cocke letter.

[195]Webb, p. 189.

[196]Siegel, p. 207.

[197]Hunt letter.

[198]Erath, p. 46.

[199]Ibid.

[200]Ibid.

[201]Ibid., pp. 46-47.

[202]Ibid., p. 47.

[203]Hunt letter.

[204]Cocke called the first man Sinclair.

[205]Cocke letter.

[206]Erath, pp. 47-48.

[207]Hunt letter.

[208]Ibid.

[209]Green, pp. 113-114.

[210]Ibid.

[211]Ibid. Wade, p. 121, and Webb, I, pp. 186-187, also must be in error in implying that Bonnell was killed December 26.

[212]Hunt letter.

[213]Ibid.

[214]Erath, p. 48.

[215]Ibid., p. 47.

[216]Ibid., pp. 48-49.

[217]Ibid., p. 49.

[218]Green, p. 115.

[219]Brown and Speer, p. 574.

[220]Ibid.

[221]Chabot, pp. 275-276.

[222]Green, p. 115.

[223]J. L. Sinks, "Journalists of Austin in 1840," in Galveston News, May 7, 1876.

[224]Certification of administrator of Bonnell estate, 1851, Bonnell "Public Debt Papers." (Handwritten.)

[225]Power of attorney certification for Bonnell estate, 1851, Bonnell "Public Debt Papers." (Handwritten.)

[226]Hill-McLeod verification, 1851, Bonnell "Public Debt Papers." (Handwritten.)

[227]Payment order to Bonnell estate for services on Santa Fe Expedition, 1851, signed by John Swisher, state auditor, Bonnell "Public Debt Papers." (Handwritten.)

APPENDICES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX A

The full text of George Bonnell's letter to Ashbel Smith, reproduced in facsimile in chapter 1, is reproduced here.

Houston, July 9th 1837

Dr. Smith:

I was in Columbia on the fourth & fifth inst. where I saw Dr. Goodrich. He was frequently in my presence, though I did not speak to him. He frequently alluded to the duel between himself & Laurence, & said that he was still of opinion that "Laurence had stolen his money." This the more surprised me as I learned on my arrival here, that he had said previous to his leaving this place that "He was fully satisfied that Laurence was innocent!

Geo. Robinson & Sterling C. Robinson were more in his company than I was, & I have no doubt, but they heard much more of his conversation on the subject than I did.

Respectfully

Geo. W. Bonnell

APPENDIX B

The full text of George Bonnell's handwritten, 4-page memorial petition to Congress for monetary relief, portions of which are reproduced in facsimile in chapter 1, is reproduced here, verbatim et literatim.

To the Honorable the Senate & the
House of Representatives of the
Republic of Texas.

Your memorialist would respectfully represent to your honorable body, that in the summer of 1836 he raised a corps of volunteers in Mississippi for the service of Texas. And that their expenses on the road were paid entirely by himself. That he arrived in Nacogdochez about the middle of August, 1836, & that himself and thirty five others joined the service for six months; & handed in a muster rool to the then commander in Chief on the army -- Gen Samuel Houston.

At that time great excitement prevailed in that section of country on account of an expected Indian invasion, & we were stationed at that place by the order of Gen. Houston. The company remained their near six weeks, entirely at the expense of your memorialist -- having never received a single ration from the government, while in service. In the mean time the fear of the expected Indian invasion perforce [?] over, & Gen. Houston was elected President -- & he (the President) not thinking the country needed our services at the time, recomended me to disband them. [End of page 1] It was accordingly done, but not till they had cost your memorialist eight hundred & seventy five dollars, in bringing them to the country & supporting them while here.

Your memorialist would further represent that neither himself nor any member of his company ever asked or received any thing for their services either in land or money -- nor do they now require it. But it is submitted to the consideration of your honorable body -- whether the expenses which your memorialist actually paid out should not be returned to him.

Your memorialist would only further remark, that he had vouchers to prove the correctness of this statement, but in crossing the Colorado

river last summer after night, he lost his saddle bags and all his papers.

For the correctness of this statement you are referred to the certificates of the President -- & Dr [?] Wm. M. Shepherd, & A. M. Tompkins, Esq.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Geo. W. Bonnell

Nov. 14th 1837 [End of page 2]

I hereby certify that the facts set forth in the aforesaid memorial by Capt Bonnell in regard to the arrival of his corps at Nacogdoches & his supporting them while there I believe to be correct. The claim amounting to eight hundred and seventy five dollars.

Nov. 5th 1837 Sam Houston

I travelled with Capt George W Bonnell from Columbus Mississippi to Nacogdoches in Texas and feel no hesitancy in saying that the above statement is correct -- having seen Capt Bonnell always pay the expenses of the company he had with him and also knowing of his purchasing for them several horses when they had lost theirs.

A. M. Tomkins

I travelled with Capt Bonnell & his company from Columbus Mi. to Alexandria Louisiana. I was aware of his incurring almost the entire expenses of the company. I do not know the precise amount, but am convinced that the sum set forth in [End of page 3] the above memorial is not too large.

Nov. 5th 1837 -- Wm M Shepherd

APPENDIX C

The full text of the announcement of George Bonnell's and Jacob Cruger's dissolution of partnership notice in the Texas Sentinel, portions of which are quoted in chapter 2, is reproduced here. The announcement first appeared in the Sentinel of August 1, 1840.

DISSOLUTION OF CO-PARTNERSHIP.

The partnership heretofore existing under the firm of Cruger & Bonnell, publishers of the Sentinel, is this day dissolved by mutual consent. All persons having claims against said firm, are requested to present them for liquidation to G. W. Bonnell, at Austin; and all those indebted to said firm, are requested to call and make immediate payment.

J. W. Cruger.

G. W. Bonnell.

Austin, July 28, 1840.

P. S. The paper will continue to be published by Geo. W. Bonnell. No change politically or otherwise, will take place in the Sentinel.

APPENDIX D

The full text of Ben Hill's and Hugh McLeod's handwritten statements certifying George Bonnell as a member of the Santa Fe Expedition, reproduced in facsimile in chapter 4, are reproduced here.

Adjutant Generals Office
Austin Jan: 27. 1851

I certify that the name of George W Bonnell appears as a private on the Muster Roll of Capt Lewis's Artillery Compy Santa Fe Pioneers & was enrolled on the 21st May 1841.

Ben F. Hill
Adjt Genl.

I do hereby certify that George W Bonnell was enrolled on the 21st May 1841 in Capt Lewis Company as a Private and was honorably discharged

H. McLeod
Late Bvt Brig Genl
[?]

APPENDIX E

The full text of the handwritten receipt for payment to the George Bonnell estate in 1851 for Bonnell's services as a Santa Fe Pioneer, reproduced in facsimile in chapter 4, is reproduced here.

Late Republic

To Geo W. Bonnell Dd.

To services on the Santa Fe Expedition from 21st May 1841 to 13 July 1842. 13. Mos & 23 days @ 22½ -- $309.75

Horses [?] -- 65 ""

$374.75

[Reverse side of receipt:]

2d. Class.

Est of
Geo W. Bonnell

Services & Losses [?]
on Santa Fe Expedn.

Certificate issued
for Three hundred
& Seventy four 75/00

May 1851.
Jno M Swisher
auditor

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The vita has been removed from the digitized version of this document.